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VOL. XIII.

HENRY MASTERTON.



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“ Poca favilla gran fiamma seconda ;
Forse diretto a me, con miglior voci
Si pregherà, perchè Cirra risponda.”

DANTE. *Paradiso*, Canto I.

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HENRY MASTERTON :

OR, THE

ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG CAVALIER.

BY

G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.

Nay, droop not: being is not breath:
'Tis fate that friends must part.
But God will bless in life, in death,
The noble soul, the gentle heart.

J. G. LOCKHART.

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PREFACE.

IN the following pages I have, perhaps, in depicting the various characters, copied more closely from types which I have seen and known than in any other work that I have ever written. In this instance, however, as in all my other works, I have avoided in any degree attempting to paint by minute traits any living model; and where, as in the character of Frank Masterton, of Little Ball-o'-fire, and others, I have drawn closely, and I believe accurately, from the dead, I have made sure that in no particular I could injure or pain living friends and relations. The person represented under the character of Frank Masterton has long gone to rest; but I can still see him, with the eye of memory, as when I last beheld him engaged in those manly sports in which he left all competition behind; and his face glowing with generous regret for one of those sharp sarcasms which seemed to break from his lips against his will. He had some faults, undoubtedly; but he possessed, to counterbalance them, a heart naturally full of noble and generous feelings, and talents of all kind, as well as genius such as would have raised him, I cannot but believe, to as high a point of fame and glory as has been attained by any one now living, had not an early death stopped him in the career which he was pursuing towards greatness.

The character of the boy called Little Ball-o'-fire, and some of the adventures of that personage, are derived from the hi-

tory of one with whom I was well acquainted in my youth, and in whom extreme old age had scarcely been sufficient to extinguish the fire and energy which marked him while a boy. Of him, however, I may have occasion to speak more hereafter, if I am ever led to publish another edition of the work called *John Marston Hall*.

I have to offer some apologies here, which I ought, perhaps, to have offered long ago, for deviating, in the latter part of the work, from the autobiographical character with which it commences. My motive for doing so was, that I found great difficulty, as I proceeded with the work, in making my hero tell his own story, and yet not betray to the reader too many of the secrets of a tale in which there was some attempt at a mystery. By joining the two distinct portions of the work together at the end of a volume, the defect did not attract so much notice as I had expected ; and some persons even read the book, as books are read in the present day, without noticing the change at all.

HENRY MASTERTON.

CHAPTER I.

I OPENED my eyes to the light of day, on the shores of that part of the British Channel at which the narrow seas which interpose between France and England first show an inclination to spread out into the Atlantic Ocean.

My father's house—— Oh, what a multitude of the thrilling memories, of early years and happy dreams and gall-less pleasures, rise up at the very name, mingling with the forms of the loved and dead, and the tones of sweet voices that are heard no more. My father's house was raised upon the summit of one of those high cliffs which guard the coast of Devonshire; and, sweeping round within view of the windows, was a small beautiful bay, not a league and a half in diameter, in which the blue waters of the sea collected deep and still, as if for the purpose of repose. Bold high rocks, of a similar character to that on which our dwelling was perched, flanked the bay to the east; and, on the west, a long range of sandy shores extended towards the Atlantic, sloping gradually up into green fertile hills, whose high tops, covered with rich woods of oak and beech, sheltered the calm expanse below from the wild gales that race across the wide ocean beyond. In some places those woods would sweep down the sides of the hills till they almost dipped their branches in the sea; and—following the bend of the bay, at a greater or less distance from the shore, during more than one half of its extent—they reached unbroken to the eastern angle of Masterton House, as my parental mansion was called; about which, broken into scattered clumps of fine old trees, they planted themselves in the valleys and the dells, and gave a character of antique grandeur to the scenery round.

Through these trees and woods, down the sides of the cliffs, among the valleys inland, and the deep coves and inner bays

by the sea shore, lay a perfect labyrinth of paths and walks, connected in the remembrance of my youth with a thousand childish adventures and exploits; and here, as we often proved in our boyish sports, a person well acquainted with the spot might baffle the pursuit even of others who possessed as intimate a knowledge of its intricacies as himself.

The house presented nothing particularly worthy of description. It was one of those, many of which were destroyed in the civil wars, sufficiently defensible to bid defiance to a small force, but too weak to resist a regular siege for any length of time. The rooms, the chimneys, and the staircases were numerous; and though all of these, except the chimneys, were small, yet sufficient space had been thrown away to build forty of such houses as are constructed in the present day.

Having given so far an account of our dwelling-place, and the country round it, I have now to speak of those by whom it was inhabited; and I must begin somewhat prior to my own recollections, in order to render my after history clear and intelligible.

Up to the time of my birth, my father, I have been told, held an office of high trust and honour at the court of King Charles I., and his character greatly assimilating with that of the monarch whom he served, a long prospect of advancement, power, and splendour, was laid open before him. Naturally fond of the country, he would willingly have spent his whole time in Devonshire, had not his official station required his presence almost continually in London. My mother, however, whose tastes were better suited to a court than those of my father, was obliged, by his especial wish and command, to remain far from the capital; and her husband, who was rather fond of martyring his feelings to his duty—sometimes, even without much necessity—imagined that, by abandoning a country life and domestic joys, he was making an inestimable sacrifice to his King. Thus, feeling himself, in his communications with the monarch, less the person obliged than the person obliging, he assumed, it was reported, a certain degree of independence and authority, to which no man was in general less inclined to submit than the King. The cause of his giving way to it so long in the case of my father, was probably that his dignity was always secure in the rigid and somewhat formal respect with which my worthy parent did not fail to accompany his opposition of the royal will, or his obdurate assertion of his own opinion. He would not have deviated from that decorous reverence for the world; and, while he was practically telling his majesty that his actions were madness or his words were folly, he was declaring in set terms his profound deference for

the royal wisdom. There existed also, as I have said before, a great similarity of feeling in many respects between the monarch and his servant; the very rigid adherence to particular theories, however opposite those theories might be, was a part of the same character. The same imperturbable, almost melancholy calmness, existed in both; the same fearlessness of consequences, but, in my father's case, without the same paroxysms of irresolution, which at times unnerved the King; the same devoted desire of doing right; but also the same imperious manner of enforcing what they judged to be so, in opposition to the reasons, prejudices, or feelings of every one else.

Such sources of sympathy did in all probability act in attaching the sovereign to my father; but upon what principle existed the great, undeviating, and devoted friendship which did exist between Lord Masterton and the Earl of Langleigh, I confess I am at a loss to know. From all I have ever heard, there never yet breathed the air of this globe two people more dissimilar in every respect, except in the basis of unswerving honour and integrity, than Lord Langleigh and my father. The one light, gay, quick, vehement; the other calm, stern, cold, determined. Lord Langleigh, with all his keen good sense and shrewd wit, set high value upon a thousand trifles which my father contemned and despised. He would not have fought a duel for the world, without his peculiar and appropriate hat, nor lain down by his wife without his particular and appointed nightcap; and yet, by his bold and reckless spirit, he would often bring himself into situations where he was obliged to fight with any hat that happened to cover him, or sleep without any nightcap at all.

Such conduct, in the eyes of my father, was the height of human absurdity; and yet for Lord Langleigh he had the most sincere regard and the most genuine respect. They had been early, long, and constant friends; and they had found through life, that while the original rectitude of their intentions generally insured a similarity of purpose, in any moment of difficulty, the quick wit of Lord Langleigh would often suggest an expedient that had not struck the slower mind of my father; while the steady judgment of Lord Masterton would often avert a danger which might have fallen on his more precipitate friend. Thus a mutual confidence and esteem had been born and grown up between them, although a number of the actions of each were matter for jest or reprehension to the other.

A period, however, arrived, towards the time of my birth, which tried their friendship by the test of adversity. The King's determination to support the prerogative of the crown by every effort, met the strongest approbation of the two friends,

till they found that that determination went farther, and menaced the liberty of the subject; but from that moment their opposition was fixed.

The sincere affection which they both felt towards their royal master, and which made them more fearful perhaps for his honour and safety, than even for the freedom of their country, induced them to take those measures of thwarting his most dangerous designs, which were likely, if discovered, to prove perilous to themselves and irritating to him.

It is by no means my purpose to enter here into the well-known historical details of the period. Suffice it to say, that my father and Lord Langleigh became the dupe of their own schemes. They were foolish enough to believe the sincerity of a body of men who professed moderation, to co-operate with a party from which they differed in ultimate objects, to imagine that all men really sought the good of their country who called themselves patriots, and to confide in an individual who talked continually of his honour. Of course they were used as tools, and despised, till they discovered their mistake, and were then betrayed, at the moment they hoped to retrieve their error.

On finding that two of his privy council had been guilty of the weakness, if not the crime to which I have alluded, the King called them to his presence; and though a lingering feeling of regard, and the conviction that their intentions were better than their deeds, prevented him from pursuing the stern and unrelenting measures which his harsher counsellors advised, he dismissed them from their offices at once, and forbade them ever to show themselves at his court again.

My father bowed in silence and withdrew, determined to obey the command to the letter. Lord Langleigh replied, that he hoped a year and a day would be sufficient to make his majesty change his counsels, his counsellors, and his commands; and retired, as if from the most indifferent conversation.

The mortification, the bitterness, and the humiliation, which my father felt most keenly, he proceeded to bury in the country, where he arrived in time to be present at my birth, and to close the eyes of my mother, whose death was the consequence of my existence. Lord Langleigh, on the contrary, proceeded on a tour of pleasure, forgot the disgrace he had suffered, enjoyed to the full new scenes, new society, and new amusements; married, became a father, and returned to the court within two years.

Though separated during this period, the two friends had not ceased to correspond; and their regard had increased, rather than diminished, under their reverses. But shortly after the return of Lord Langleigh to the court, his letters to my father

were interrupted for two months; and, at length, the news of his committal to the Tower, his trial, and his condemnation for high treason, reached Lord Masterton in Devonshire. My father instantly set off for London with all speed; and arrived in time to offer consolation and sympathy to his friend, if he could not afford him assistance. His own fate Lord Langleigh had borne with easy firmness. He acknowledged to my father that he had, since his return to London, been more imprudent than before he left it; and, though he solemnly averred that he had never entertained a treasonable design, yet he confessed that the judgment which had been passed upon him had been justified by strong cause of suspicion. Death he looked upon as a man of the most dauntless courage may regard a scarecrow; and all the pomp and circumstance of public execution he spoke of with a jest; but the doom which *he* feared not, had gone with fatal effect to the bosom of his wife. She had done all that woman could do to move an inflexible monarch. She had used prayers, and tears, and influence in vain. She had sunk under the united effects of grief and exertion; and a week before the time appointed for the death of her husband, her spirit had left a world of sorrow, for a brighter and a happier place of dwelling. In regard to her, Lord Langleigh dared not speak with my father, for it was a subject that unmanned him; but of his child—his little Emily—he spoke long and fondly. He gave her into my father's charge, and exacted a promise from him that he would watch, and guard, and cherish her, as his own. The promise was willingly made; and, in addition, my father voluntarily pledged himself to see her married to his eldest son, as soon as years admitted of their union.

I have often heard my father describe the scene which took place when this promise was made. It was the last night Lord Langleigh had to live; and when he spoke of his child, the severing of that dear tie shook him more than the parting from life itself. Like the breaking chord of some fine instrument, it vibrated through a thousand corresponding tones of feeling in his heart. He wept bitterly, as for the last time he kissed the infant cheek of her who was the last bond between him and earth; and, bidding the nurse take her from him, he wrung my father's hand, solemnly repeating the injunctions he had given respecting her.

"Now leave me, Masterton," he said, "leave me. In parting with that child, I have already felt the edge of the axe. What is to come," he added, resuming his composure, "is but as mounting my horse to go and join my other Emily, who has set out before me; and the way, thanks to the executioner from Calais, is short and easy. I have yet one other friend to take

leave of," he continued; "a poor, good youth, that, in happier days, I helped to his promotion; and who now, by some evil chance, has fallen upon the rueful task of captain of the guard over me. He waits to see me, for the last time, ere he leads me to the block; so fare thee well, Masterton, fare thee well! We part in this world; but, through Christ, we shall be re-united in Heaven!"

A young officer entered as my father passed out; and the two friends separated, never to meet again. The next morning passed in horror to my father, who remained with the infant child of his friend, counting the last moments of that friend's life. The execution was ordered for noon; but about nine o'clock, the door of my father's chamber was thrown open, and a messenger of the privy council appeared, charged to bring Lord Masterton before that body. My father, of course, obeyed at once; but, as they proceeded, he naturally endeavoured to ascertain from the messenger the cause of the very unexpected summons which he had received. The officer was in no degree reserved, and replied directly, "that he believed there was matter of accusation against my father, for contriving and aiding the late escape of Lord Langleigh from the Tower."

The joyful exclamation which the sudden news of his friend's evasion called from my father's lips, was sufficient proof to the messenger that his prisoner was not only innocent of the charge, but ignorant of the deed. The privy council, however, were not so easily satisfied, and my father was himself committed to the same prison that had received his friend, after having learned that, early in the morning of that day, it had been discovered that both Lord Langleigh and the captain of the guard had disappeared, leaving no trace whatever of their flight. For eleven days my father remained a prisoner; but during that time the government strained every nerve to overtake the fugitives; and, though they did not succeed in that endeavour, they ascertained that the unfortunate nobleman who was the object of their search had only escaped one sort of death to encounter another.

Two persons, it was discovered, similar in appearance to the prisoner and his companion, had reached Sheerness early on the morning of their escape, and had embarked on board a Dutch vessel, which had appeared there on the preceding day. Violent gales of wind succeeded; and, after having been seen during the whole day endeavouring to get clear of the coast, the vessel was hidden by the night, only to be found a wreck upon the Kentish shores the next morning. One person alone was saved by the fishermen of Deal; and he was so bruised by the falling of one of the masts, and by being dashed against the

beach, that his life was only protracted for a few hours. During that time, however, he acknowledged that he had perished in endeavouring to secure the escape of Lord Langleigh from the doom pronounced on him by law; and made a confession of the means he himself had used, as captain of the guard, to open the gates of the Tower to his former patron. His death followed, before he could be examined by any competent authority; but as his words went to acquit every one of any knowledge of the facts but himself, my father was dismissed from imprisonment, and suffered to return to retirement and his family.

CHAPTER II.

SUCH were some of the events which preceded the period of my own personal recollection—a period to which I shall for the future confine myself. The first objects of my remembrance, though certainly faint and far away, are not so much misty and indistinct, as they are separate and detached. Many particular incidents I can still recall with more vivid identity, more clear precision, than the occurrences of the year just past; but these incidents are things apart and unconnected with the general course of existence—small green oases on which memory rests in the midst of a wide desert of forgetfulness. I remember myself as a little boy of between four and five years old, playing with a beautiful little girl about two years younger; and I have not forgot that my elder brother Francis, who was at that time nearly ten, made me cry most bitterly, by telling me that she was not my wife, but his. Emily Langleigh, however, clung to me; and my brother, who loved me dearly, soothed me again into tranquillity, by telling me I should keep her if I would not cry. Several other childish incidents of the same nature are impressed upon my memory; but they are by no means of sufficient value to justify narration; and I shall content myself with giving a sketch of our early years, which passed without much incident or variety, notwithstanding the great and stirring events that were taking place around.

The disappointment of his ambition, the humiliation of his pride, the death of his wife, and the loss of his friend, had all more or less contributed to add both gloom and sternness to my father's character; and the unquestioning obedience with which his commands were uniformly met, within his own domains, rendered him from day to day more imperious in his manner, although the melancholy reserve which pervaded his whole

mind, made his orders few ; and his natural sense of equity and humanity caused them in general to be such as were easily fulfilled. But he allowed not a moment's hesitation or doubt in their execution ; and the steady clearness of his own intellect scarcely suffered him to make allowance for diffidence or misconception. Thus in his own family, and by his own domestics, he was feared and respected, rather than loved ; and in the neighbourhood, which was but scantily peopled, he was more esteemed than liked. Even his attachment to his children, which was great, was controlled by a certain sternness which, though it did not deprive him of our affection, mingled our fondness with terror ; and our only way of showing our love was by a watchful anxiety to catch and obey the slightest expression of his will.

The greater part of my father's time was passed in solitude, if that can be called so, where the society of the learned and the wise of other days—a society which we can form on calm reflection and select without offence—supplies the place of that living crowd, which we must take at venture as it comes ; and in which we cannot winnow the gold dust from the drossy sand. His library was his chief resort ; and there, I have remarked, the principal subjects of his study were those arts of policy which he had renounced for ever, or that philosophical facility of temper and demeanour which he never by any chance displayed.

His exercise, taken at stated hours, always combined some other purpose. It was either devoted to pay some visit of stately ceremony to the neighbouring gentry, or to teach, or witness the instruction of my brother in some of those polite exercises for which he had himself been famous—the management of his horse, the use of his sword, to shoot, to wrestle, or to swim.

At a very early age I also was admitted to witness these sports, though not permitted to take part in them, farther than in riding the immemorial pony, which had carried me, I believe, before I could walk. Mine, however, was all the eagerness and all the excitement of the scene. My father and brother passed through the various feats and evolutions of the riding-school and the regiment, with the same steady calmness ; and while my heart throbbed with ardour and anxiety, while my young eye flashed, and my cheek glowed with pleasure and expectation, it seemed to them but a matter of mere practice, to be taught by the one, and acquired by the other, without their feelings being at all moved in the employment of the hour.

Thus passed the time, while the fewness of the years which either my brother or myself had numbered, rendered the difference of our ages more decided ; but as we both grew up, and

I too began to mingle in the more manly exercises with which he was still proceeding, a great change took place in our relative situation.

No two creatures on earth could be more different in character and disposition than Frank and myself; and yet, be it ever remembered, that we loved each other throughout, most dearly.

He was a singular being, my brother, and it is only by detailing snatches of what he did, that his character can be clearly displayed. In my early youth he seemed to regard me as a sort of pet, which was to be spoilt and chastised; fondled, loved, and controlled as he pleased: and, in truth, I believe that during all our mutual lives, he continued more or less to consider me in the same light. Nay, even long after we had grown up, when my impetuosity burst all thralldom, it only seemed as if he lent the power into my own hands, which it was his to exercise over me, and let me have my own way more as a favour than a right.

And yet, though he loved me, and though I loved him—for on every occasion where his voice, or his hand, or his talents would support or aid me, they were exerted in my behalf,—yet he never, or but rarely gave me his confidence. Indeed it was not in his character to do so. He was naturally reserved and grave, fond of long and solitary rambles, and of deep thought, across the cloud-like sombreness of which, the lightning of enthusiasm seemed seldom or never to break. Still, he was by no means without passions; but, though naturally strong and overpowering, they were not easily excitable; and, requiring ever external objects to call them into action, seemed to have no original source in his own mind; or, like the fire of a volcano, to lie hid deep under mountains of grey dust and ashes.

The pursuits that engaged him were not, in general, like those of other youths. Profound and abstract studies, long, abstruse calculations, would occupy him day after day and night after night, till his bright brown eye would wax dim with watching, and his dark black hair would grow tangled and dishevelled with intense neglect. But then again he would spring upon his horse, and ride like some of the fiendish horsemen of a German tale, the cavalier and his beast seemingly inspired by but one will, defying space and obstacles, and time and fatigue. Or he would catch up his gun, and day after day roam through the woods performing feats of marksmanship that almost repel belief. Then again he would lie idle and listless on the grass in the sun, to use his own expression, “like the village natural at an inn-door,” and comment quaintly on the absurdities of man—of whom he knew little or nothing; and the hatefulness of cities—that he had never seen!

Though the natural tone of his mind was a sort of gloomy reserve, yet there would occasionally intervene moments of a happier mood, in which, as the humour prompted, he would display great powers to interest and amuse, or to censure and to sneer, or to reason and confute. Even in those early years he was a most accomplished sophist; and, with a vein of casuistry which he had acquired Heaven knows where, he would have out-argued the cunning father of all false reasoning himself. Yet he never appeared to have any sort of eagerness, or to feel any sort of excitement in all the various occupations in which he consumed his time. If he argued, it was with cool precision, and apparently more for the sake of victory than from any deep impression of the justice of the proposition he supported. When he read, he cared not for interruption; and would lay down and resume his book with perfect indifference, though, when left to himself, he would pore over it for days together. Were he called on to stop while urging his horse forward in full career, he would bring him up at once, without a change of aspect, or an appearance of haste; and when following with his crossbow a deer in the spring, no rapid energy betrayed the fatal certainty of his aim.*

My own feelings towards Frank were certainly of a mingled character. By right of primogeniture, rank, station and fortune were his; while the fortune of my mother, though it secured me competence, was but a younger brother's portion, and approached not near to affluence. Yet far was it from me to envy my brother's superior expectations. Of the splendour and the wealth that awaited him, I entertained not one jealous desire. On the contrary, I thought of his possessing all that could honour or distinguish him, with pleasure and with pride; and, contenting with the second station in my family, I would willingly have added, had it been in my power, to the riches and the lordships of my house's head.

But his talents and his skill, I confess, I envied. The perfect ease with which he seemed to do everything that to other men required long practice and exertion, was the object of my vain endeavour, and the subject of many a bitter mortification. I

* From various indications, the attentive reader would doubtless discover that the character of Frank Masterton, the elder brother, is not drawn from imagination, even were no such admission made upon the part of the author. Individual traits of character are the property of every person who observes, and attempts to portray, human nature; but the writer of the above pages, from his own peculiar views of what is right in society, has refrained from painting what may be called full length pictures of anybody he has actually known, except in two or three instances, in all of which, as in the present case, the original had long been dead before the feeble pen which attempted to depict him had begun its task.

felt that I was not deficient either in mental or corporeal powers. I had as much facility in acquiring knowledge or art as most of those whom I encountered ; and at a very early period, when I witnessed my brother's superiority, I resolved by close application to outdo him, especially in manly exercises. But it seemed as if he had got a start of me in the race of life, which I was never to recover. After long and constant practice, I called him to try his carbine at the target. My bullets lodged within the inner ring, but his cut the bull's eye on every side. With the foils it was the same. No exercise put me on a par with him ; and it was only in riding, to which we had both been accustomed from our very infancy, that I could at all compete with him on equal terms.

Many a time, after some unsuccessful trial, have I gone and sat for hours in some of the deep nooks of the bay, pondering gloomily over my own want of success, and trying in vain to discover by any effort of my mind, what was the flaw in my nature, which rendered all my efforts so ineffectual. No feeling of anger towards my brother, however, ever mingled with my meditations. I was dissatisfied with myself ; and the more so, as I found that my very eagerness rendered my failure more certain. When by any chance the sons of the neighbouring gentry entered into competition with me in the sports to which we were accustomed, feeling confident by constant practice, I far excelled what I could ever accomplish when my brother was my rival ; and I believe he purposely avoided all such meetings, in order to let me carry off the prizes of the day.

It must be remarked at the same time that, even had not such been his motive, I do not think he ever would have sought any of these assemblies. In this we differed as much as in any other part of our characters. He hated and shunned society ; and in general, when forced by circumstances to mingle with others of his own age and rank, remained silent and inactive ; wrapped in an impenetrable reserve, which was mixed up of both pride and shyness. To me, on the contrary, society was more frequently a delight. I loved, it is true, to ramble in solitude over the rocks, or through the woods, or by the side of the calm blue fanciful sea ; or to skim over its bosom, alone in my own boat, and dream sweet dreams of a splendid and a fragrant world, that existed but in my own imagination. But then, when these dreams were dreamt, I loved to have some one to share them with ; to whom I could say what I would do, and how I would act, when I should be suffered to go forth into the visionary place, which I fancied was laid out before my steps. I was fond of the beauties of nature too. I delighted to perch myself upon some high ground on a day of mingled cloud and sunshine,

and mark the different aspects of the scene, as the broad masses of shadow were driven across the face of the country by the wind—now, seeing tower and town and wood, as, all involved in deep shade, they rested in mysterious darkness on a bright and sunny background of hill beyond; and now watching them as they emerged into clear light, and smiled up in the fulness of the rays, while the shadow of the cloud hurried rapidly over the uplands behind.

Every nook of our own woods too—whether, breaking suddenly away, they afforded a wide grand prospect over the sea and its shores of bold and broken rock; or, gathering round some fountain, or bending over the lapse of some pure stream, they formed a sweet home scene, of calm and mild repose—every nook was known, and loved, and familiar, to my footsteps. The face of all the rocks also; each path, each angle; every sea-side cove, every cave and every bay, were visited in turn; and were the haunts of a thousand wild dreams and enthusiastic imaginings. And yet, as I wandered through the beautiful country that surrounded our dwelling, I longed to have some one to share my fancies and my pleasures, to admire where I admired, and dream along with me. At length those longings found an object; and my imagination fixed upon a person, whose coming was not far distant, whom I determined to lead through all the spots I loved myself, and with whom I proposed to renew all the enjoyment of a lovely scene and a lovely season.

This person was Emily Langleigh, who at seven years of age had been sent by my father to a convent in one of the neighbouring islands, to acquire all those feminine accomplishments, which could not so well be procured in the dwelling of a widower in Devonshire. She had now reached thirteen years of age; and Lord Masterton had wisely determined to withdraw her at that period from the care of the good nuns, whose instructions had gone as far as he desired; and to establish her in his own house, till her age should permit her union with my brother, who had now attained his twentieth year. The arrangements for that union were fully understood by the whole family; and I, at fifteen, prepared to receive Emily Langleigh as my sister.

I dreamed then of showing her, in the capacity of a brother, all that could please, or interest, or amuse in the spot she had so long quitted; for I had perfectly settled in my own mind—whether from a thorough acquaintance with my brother's character, or from my own wishes, I knew not—that the cicerone-ship of the place would be left in my hands. With boyish ardour and eagerness, I pictured to my mind's eye the pleasure

she would feel in this beautiful scene, or that curious object; and my whole dreams—dangerous ones they were—consisted in contributing to her amusement, or witnessing her delight. Nevertheless, there was not one idea amongst all that went on in my heart and in my brain, that had aught of offence in its nature. Not a feeling, not a thought possessed my breast which I wished, or could have wished, my brother not to see. So far from it, with the gay and somewhat teasing liveliness of my youthful disposition, I jested him continually upon the coming of his future wife; and attributed to him feelings of anxiety and agitation, which I knew he was very far from experiencing. Still farther, I even contemplated standing by his side when Emily Langleigh gave him her hand at the altar, and partook in anticipation of the happiness that was to be theirs.

As the time came near for Emily's arrival, my delight ran off in a thousand extravagances, which called down upon my head a reprimand from Lord Masterton; and as I broke a horse for Emily to ride, or new-rigged my boat for Emily to sail, my brother looked on with a smile, that was anything but gay.

At length Emily Langleigh arrived at Masterton House, a bright, pretty creature, of little more than thirteen; with a figure and features which, though yet scarcely formed, afforded the promise of a very lovely girl hereafter.

My father stood on the steps to receive her, and by his side my brother Frank, for whom, as a matter of propriety, I made way. But though Lord Masterton was particularly kind to his young ward, and though he greatly softened towards her the stern asperity of his general demeanour, my brother met her in one of his coldest moods, remained profoundly silent; and, if he offered her some little attentions which he could not avoid, his politeness was indeed somewhat scanty.

Emily herself had been made aware of the engagement entered into between my father and hers; and raised her beautiful hazel eyes towards my brother's face, with a look of imploring anxiety, well calculated to win its way to the inmost recesses of the heart; but there was nothing answered her; and, repelled at once into herself, she turned to me with lighter and less embarrassed feelings, and received my gay and warm salute as cheerfully as it was given.

That first interview seemed the type of the future demeanour of all the parties. The arrival of Emily changed not in the least the usual conduct of my brother. He would indeed, sometimes, as if out of pure perversity, request her presence to see some curious object, or beg to escort her on some particular ride, when I had laid out a totally different expedition; but in general he remained as much alone, as grave, as studious, as if

she had never entered the house. Towards him, on the contrary, Emily's behaviour was all that was excellent. The slightest wish he expressed she was prompt to obey; all his actions were approved, all his words were listened to; and it seemed that having made up her mind to become his wife, she was practising beforehand the conduct which might be proper in that station.

To me she was all frank kindness, easy, unaffected, unembarrassed; and towards me too, all that girlish gaiety broke forth, which in the presence of my brother was restrained by an unconquerable timidity. She would laugh with, she would jest with me, she would tease me; and roaming like two wild things through the woods, and by the sea shore, the keen encounters of our young wits would vary the burst of enthusiastic pleasure, which the sight of every new beauty would call forth. Many a little accident occurred to us in our rambles, many a little service I rendered the fair girl, who every day and every hour was expanding into more splendid loveliness; and in the course of our almost uninterrupted companionship we laid up a treasure of mutual thoughts, and feelings, and memories, which none knew or shared in but ourselves.

The idea of rivalry between Frank and myself, never entered the imagination of my father, or of Emily, or of myself. We all considered it as a thing so perfectly out of the question, that we took no care to obviate a danger which we did not believe to exist. Whether my brother ever dreamed of a growing affection between Emily and myself, or not, he took no pains to guard against it either; and when, by that assumption of superiority and power over me which I have before mentioned, he had—as often happened—given me pain and offence, he would send Emily to find me out, in the solitude to which I had carried my indignation, for the purpose of soothing and consoling me, and bringing about a reconciliation.

The tones of her voice as she came on such messages of peace, became dear, too dear to me, as time flew on; and yet, as I have said, I had not even an idea of what was passing in my heart. Various circumstances, indeed, should have given me a better insight into my own mind. I never placed her on her horse without feeling my whole frame thrill. Once when an unexpected influx of the sea forced me to bear her across a little bay in my arms, I felt my heart beat far more than haste, or danger, ever occasioned. I experienced I knew not what painful sensations too, when she praised my brother's skill and grace in all military exercises; and I gradually grew sad when she was absent, and cheerful only when she was near. I remarked, also, that Frank often turned his eyes, first upon her,

and then suddenly upon me; and more than once, about two years after Emily's arrival, my brother's servant, Gabriel Jones, broke in upon our solitary rambles.

Having mentioned this man's name, I may as well say a few words more of his character. He was as artful a villain as ever lived; but, according to the puritanical fashion of the day, he strove to cover his knavery with the garb of sanctity.

At that time, religious fanaticism raged in England as a species of epidemic, and every cunning rogue used it as a cloak for his deeper designs. My brother Frank, however, understood his valet's character well; and used to declare in his cynical moods, that he would rather be served by a skilful knave than an honest fool. But the master who chooses such a servant should never let his judgment sleep, or give one moment the rein to his passions. In many instances, Frank at once detected his knave's arts, and used them quite contrary to Master Gabriel's intentions; but at other times, though not the dupe, my brother was the sufferer, and had to regret deeply that he had, to use his own expression, "condescended to play a game at chess with his own servant, and had made one false move."

The person who filled about my person the same dignified station, was a youth of much less pretensions, and more honesty. He was not, like Gabriel, a puritan in any thing; and far less like Gabriel, a puritan in taste and sentiment. He could not judge the feeling expressed in a pale pink doublet, or a bright blue vest. He could neither tie a sword-knot in fifty different fashions; nor could he proportion the rose to the shoe it was to grace, with the exquisite precision of a London haberdasher. But William Fells had a simple shrewdness which served him as well as Gabriel Jones's artful cunning; and he had, besides, a quick hand, a bold heart, a ready wit, and a frame of iron.

Whatever were Gabriel's motives for watching Emily and myself—and whether he, in the baseness of his own nature, attributed to us schemes and purposes of concealment which we never dreamed of—I feel certain that my brother was perfectly guiltless of all connivance in his *espionage*. On the contrary, whenever Frank's eye rested on me and Emily together, there seemed a melancholy glance of regard towards us both, which never shone in them on any other occasion, and which implied anything but jealousy or suspicion. One day, indeed, I remember entering his antechamber, when the valet was in the act of hanging his sword over my brother's shoulder, and had apparently been insinuating doubt of some one—for Frank, as I approached, replied aloud in his calm, logical manner:—

"No, no, Master Gabriel, it is the worst policy in the world

ever to bear an appearance of doubt towards another, till he have given you just cause. Your suspicion may make an enemy, but it can never gain a friend; and a man who is distrusted, finding he has nothing to gain by honesty, or to lose by villany, very often becomes a knave through having been suspected of being so."

What had been the previous conversation I do not know, or whether it referred to me at all, or not; but the moment I advanced, Gabriel cut short his reply at the "Verily now," which was bursting from his lips, and the matter dropped.

Such was the state of my family, till the period when Emily attained her seventeenth, and I my nineteenth year. Another year was to see her the bride of my brother; but events in the mean time had been taking place around us, which must be noticed before proceeding any farther, as they had a material influence on all my after-fate.

CHAPTER III.

NEVER yet, perhaps, in the history of this strange globe which we inhabit, had a private family, possessing considerable public influence, wealth, station, and repute, been suffered to enjoy such undisturbed tranquillity, in the midst of the most tremendous civil strife, as that which we continued to possess, during the wars of the great rebellion. Those errors in the government of Charles I. which my father had early seen and endeavoured to oppose, acting upon the passions, the follies, and the bigotry of an excited people, had gradually arrayed one half of the country against the other. Ambition, fanaticism, and patriotic as well as religious zeal, had been too strong for gallant devotion and enthusiastic loyalty; the peculiar follies of the puritans had invigorated themselves, and drawn many to their cause; while the peculiar follies of the cavaliers had weakened their own party, and alienated their friends. Success had crowned the efforts of the rebels; and the unhappy monarch of England had by this time trusted to the Scots, and been sold to the English. Scarcely a nobleman in Great Britain had not drawn his sword in behalf of one or other of the contending parties, and yet Lord Masterton had been suffered to remain perfectly neuter, without annoyance from any of the factions which tore his distressed country.

The cause of this conduct, and the immunity which attended it, was to be found in various circumstances. When deprived

of his office, and dismissed from the councils of the King nineteen years before, my father had been told by the monarch's own lips, that he was discharged from his service for ever, and had been warned never to show himself in the sovereign's presence again. On that occasion, my father, in the bitterness of his heart, had vowed to obey to the letter; and never—whatever were the misfortunes which the conduct he had opposed might bring—to exert either his mental or corporal powers, in behalf of a monarch he judged ungrateful.

With a man of my father's disposition, the oath itself not only remained binding under all circumstances, but the impressions under which it had been taken were never in the slightest degree effaced; and he beheld the whole progress of the calamities which fell both on Charles and his people, with grief indeed; but without one effort to support either of the parties into which the country had become divided.

There was a time in the civil war, when the aid and influence of such a man might have turned the scale in favour of the King; and an officer of high station near the person of Charles, visited my father about that period. No change, however, resulted from their conference. The officer and Lord Masterton parted with cold civility, and the house resumed its quiet.

To Charles himself, the neutrality of Lord Masterton was of course far more favourable than his enmity; and as the King well knew that his sword, though not wielded in his favour, would never be drawn against him without some deep provocation, he took care that the most scrupulous respect should be paid to his property, by the royal adherents in all parts of the country.

On the other hand, the Commonwealth party had not forgot that my father had been one of the first sufferers from opposing that extension of the prerogative which gave them their original ground of complaint. They looked upon him, therefore, as in some sort a martyr to their own cause; and were at first in great hopes that he would openly espouse their side, in the hostilities which soon took place. Although disappointed in this, they too were glad to suffer him to remain neutral! and as he made no levies of armed retainers, and took no steps which could be regarded as military preparation, farther than the defence of his own house and property required, they remained satisfied that his neutrality was sincere and unfeigned.

His former friendship with Fairfax greatly contributed to relieve my father from any of those military visitations which the parliamentary generals did not scruple to inflict upon all who were doubtful in their politics; and the situation of Masterton House, in a remote part of Devonshire and on the sea-

coast, removed it from the general line of march of the fanatical forces.

All these circumstances combined to afford us more perfect immunity from the troubles and disasters to which England in general was subject, than perhaps any other house could boast. It is true that from time to time my father received a summons to attend the parliament at Westminster or at Oxford, and I have seen him so far moved as to take two slow and silent turns in the great hall, before his determination seemed fixed; but never more. He always found some good and valid excuse for withholding his presence, and those anxieties passed away. It is true also that every day we heard of battles fought, of beleaguered cities, and of all the turns of the long and deadly struggle which tore the bosom of our country. But neither my brother nor myself were permitted to share any farther in the strife, than by offering our prayers for the King's success.

It was impossible to stand calmly by, and witness all the exciting events which were passing around us, without feeling an ardent desire to take some part in the contest; and where is the youth, who, in his eager gaze over the busy scene in which he has never mingled, does not attribute to himself powers and energies to will and do, far more than the might of man could ever accomplish? Oh, how I dreamed of glory and of victory! and how sincerely I believed, that were my arm but free and a hundred stout troopers at my back, I could have turned the fate of any of the thousand fields that were fought and lost in the King's cause.

Nay, one day, I did the boldest thing that it was in my conception to do. I remonstrated with my father on the indifference to which he not only compelled himself, but me. It was not long before the fatal surrender of the monarch to the Scottish troops, and Lord Masterton happened to be in a far milder and more easy mood than he usually displayed. He had been talking to me with kindness and confidence, and the conversation naturally turned to the passing occurrences of the day. I spoke youthfully and ardently; and for some time my father listened with a smile, one of the very few I ever saw beam upon his lip. He even went farther, and explained to me his views in regard to the result of the war. The King, he said, would soon be obliged to accede to the proposals of the Parliament, and would then re-assume the reins of government. The terms imposed would doubtless at first be hard enough, he continued, but then, the more moderate of all parties, gradually recovering from the frenzy of civil strife, would unite with the true friends of the monarch to regain for him that full portion of power, which ought

to be entrusted to the chief magistrate for the benefit of the whole community.

His arguments, however, did not satisfy me. It seemed to me that the parties in the state were farther and farther dividing instead of uniting; and that the only likely termination to their strife was in the extinction of the weaker. In the mean while I thought that the best blood of the country was being shed, her commerce, her agriculture, her arts, were going to ruin, and a thousand evils were daily impressed by fate with the stamp of certainty, which no problematic benefits could ever outvalue, while he—and, as I believed, many others—stood inactive, when their influence might have terminated the struggle, and restored peace to England.

All this, and perhaps much more, I should probably have poured forth in the warmth of my feelings; but my father stopped me in full career. "Be satisfied, sir," he said, "that I shall do my duty to my country and to myself, as becomes me; and if ever the time should come, that the King be really in danger, as some men judge even now, you, Henry, and your brother, shall have, not only liberty, but command, to peril all in defence of the monarchy."

He spoke sternly, and I was silent; but an adventure in which I was engaged not many months after, served to hasten the period which was to see our family also enter with tardy steps the arena of civil contention.

On the morning of one fine day in the middle of June, I had laid out a scheme for taking Emily quite across the bay in my boat, to visit the beautiful ruins of St. Helen's Abbey, which lay amongst the woods on the other side. Emily had agreed to make the excursion, the boat was prepared, and everything promised us a day of pleasure, when my brother deranged our whole plan by asking whether the Lady Emily Langleigh would not accompany him to fly his hawks on the banks of the stream. Emily at once assented; and I, mortified and angry, got up from the breakfast-table, where the proposal was made, and, descending to the court, ordered my horse, to ride away the irritation which my disappointment had occasioned. As I mounted, I caught a glance of Emily, standing at one of the windows, and looking at me with an expression, which I construed into a reproach for my hasty passion.

I spurred on my horse, however, and, followed by two servants, rode on towards Exeter, which lay at the distance of perhaps sixteen miles from Masterton House. Thither I often went, to gather news of the passing events; and I now took that road habitually. When riding or walking with Emily, no tor-

toise ever retarded its steps more than I was willing to do; but the moment I was alone, I instinctively put my horse upon his quickest paces, and in three-quarters of an hour I was more than half way to Exeter.

I had galloped up one hill, and down another, all the way, with my thoughts in a state of very unreasonable confusion; but about six miles from the city, the road dives down a steep declivity on one side of the valley, and, after taking two or three turns amongst the trees of Bewley Wood, rises abruptly up the opposite ascent. By the time I had reached this spot, my first impatience had evaporated, and I began the descent with somewhat more caution than I had hitherto thought necessary. The wind set towards me; and, as I descended, I heard some voices singing a psalm in the wood below, no unusual occurrence in those days. The very puritanical howl with which the singers poured forth their canticle, turned me sick; and preparing myself to encounter some of their hypocritical impertinence as I passed, I rode on, mentally giving all the fanatics in England to the devil, by the way. Before I had turned the corner of the wood, the psalm had ceased, and I heard one untuneful throat admonishing another not to sing so loud.

"Verily, Habacuc, if thou pourest forth the song of rejoicing so vehemently," said the one, "the prey over which thou rejoicest shall escape from thy hand. Art thou not bidden to do all things in season?"

"Yea, verily!" answered the other: "but is it not written—'Rejoice, for God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand;' and do I not, even now, hear his horse's feet approaching?"

As he spoke, I turned the corner of the wood; and perceived, about fifty paces in advance, four men on horseback, with their backs towards me, and evidently watching for some one whom they expected to come from the opposite side. They were all clothed in stout buff coats, with large riding-boots, steeple hats, broad swords in their hands, and wide breeches of rough frieze; and it was plain that they were either—as they would themselves have called it—"bent upon spoiling the Egyptians, or leading some one away captive," which, in those days of disorder, was often done without any law or authority whatsoever.

The moment my horse had turned the angle of the wood, the clearness with which they distinguished his footfalls, showed Master Habacuc that his ears had deceived him, and that the sounds he heard were coming from a different quarter to that from which he had at first supposed they proceeded. All the horsemen instantly wheeled round, and reconnoitred my party with very suspicious looks; doubtless feeling many godly yearnings towards the gold which they saw upon my cloak, and

that which, they doubted not, was in my purse. But those were times when no man rode unprepared: my two servants were armed up to the teeth, and I had my sword by my side, and my pistols at my saddle-bow; so that—what with the superiority of our horses, and the better spirit in our hearts—we were more than a match for any four fanatics upon the earth. They made a movement, as they saw me putting my horse into a canter, to let me pass; and without any ceremony I dashed through the midst of them, splashing them with the dirt from the little muddy river that there crossed the road.

No notice was taken of a rudeness, which I cannot but confess was somewhat intentional; but as I passed, I remarked, that one of the party was much better mounted than the rest, and wore his hair long, though not absolutely in the floating fashion of the cavaliers. His face I did not particularly notice in the rapidity of my course; and in a moment I had again turned the wood, and was ascending the opposite hill.

For half a mile further, I encountered nobody on the road, but a country girl with a basket of eggs; and I began to think that my fanatics in the valley would be disappointed of their prey, when I saw at some distance two horsemen coming quickly on, at a sharp trot, and seemingly deeply engaged in conversation. I perceived, as they approached, that they were both considerably advanced in life, and dressed very plainly, the one in black, the other in a dull brown. The first was extremely dark in complexion. His hair and beard were as black as jet; and in person he was thin and bony, showing not a vestige of the red hue of health in his face. The other was far more florid, not corpulent but stout, with mustachios, but no beard, while flowing from under his hat was a thing which, in those days, I had never seen, but which I afterwards found to be a mass of false hair, called a periwig. The strangers looked up as they passed; and the second fixed his eyes upon me for a moment, somewhat intently, then resumed his conversation with the other, and rode on.

I, too, suffered them to pass, doubting whether they could be the persons for whom the psalm-singers had been waiting in the valley, and endeavouring to determine if it would or would not be right to warn them of the danger. After a moment's thought, however, I drew up my horse, and galloped after them. The sound of his feet instantly made them stop. "I am afraid, gentlemen," said I, "that you may think me somewhat impertinent in thus detaining you; but I cannot let you pass without giving you a piece of information which may concern you. There may perhaps be danger before you."

"Sir, we consider your conduct politeness, not impertinence;

and though somewhat accustomed to dangers, we rather differ from my good friend, Monsieur de Marville, who, when he first saw a Salmi de Bécasse in the second course, declared that he loved to be taken by surprise."

Such was the reply of the more florid horseman; the darker one said not a word: and I proceeded to inform them of what I had seen and heard in the valley. The effect which my tidings produced on the countenance of each, at once showed me that they were by no means indifferent to the psalm-singing in the wood. In truth, I never saw perplexity more completely displayed in the faces of any men than it was in those of my two new companions. They looked at one another and at me for a moment or two in silence; and then the one who had spoken exclaimed, "If we go back to Exeter, we are taken, to a certainty!"

"If we go forward," replied the other, "we are but two men, nearly unarmed, against four well-armed ones: yet we had better risk it."

"Oh, certainly," said the first, at once resuming the light air with which he had been speaking before. "We have both risked somewhat more in our day, and therefore let us onward. Young gentleman, we thank you for your courtesy; but we must even go on to try how near akin these same fanatics are to ostriches, and whether they can digest cold iron."

"If the affair be likely to come to such arbitrament," answered I, "by your good leave, gentlemen, I will join myself to your party. Here are my two servants, as stout knaves as ever mounted a horse, and well armed. Five men may perchance overawe these blackbirds of the wood; and, at all events, if they do not prevent strife, they will spare bloodshed, by bringing it sooner to an end."

"I thank you sincerely, sir," replied the stranger in black; "I have myself abandoned the trade of shedding blood, and follow a milder calling; yet those who force me to betake myself again to steel may have cause to rue the day they did so. I go now to seek the recovery of some property that was wrongfully taken from me; and my friend General St. Maur here is kind enough, like you, to peril his own life to accompany me."

"Faith, there are few things, Du Tillet, that I would sooner peril," replied the old gentleman, who had spoken first: "but let us proceed; and by the way, this young gentleman may give us some knowledge of the politics of this neighbourhood."

To do so, did not at all accord with my intentions; and therefore expressing both my unwillingness and my incapacity, I inquired what news of the King and the Parliament in London.

Of both, the strangers could afford me plenty of intelligence—some certain, some problematic; but I heard the whole tale of the King's surrender, and of the various manœuvres of the army and the Parliament, as well as many a just, and too soon fulfilled prognostication of the fall of the monarchy, and the death of the monarch.

Such conversation soon brought us to the top of the hill; and beckoning forward the lackeys, I bade them stand to their arms—an order they were very willing to obey where the puritans were concerned; for, either from hatred to my brother's worthy attendant, Gabriel Jones, or from some other more general cause, a most universal detestation to all fanatics had spread itself throughout the dwellers in Masterton House.

We proceeded both slowly and cautiously on the descent into the wood below, for the psalm-singing had ceased; and as we never, in those days, attributed anything like fair and open contest to the puritans, we doubted not that they had hid themselves among the trees, to take our party by surprise. Much injustice, in those respects, did the cavaliers do the fanatics, who—to say sooth, now that the party mania has gone by which once blinded my eyes—fought on most occasions with a bold, steady, and determined courage, which might have graced a better cause. In the present instance, also, we were completely deceived; for the moment we had turned the corner of the wood, we found the four godly worthies in their buff jerkins, planted in the same spot where I left them. Each of my servants, as well as myself, had by this time pistol in hand; and my two new companions, being without fire-arms, had drawn their swords, so that we presented a somewhat formidable body.

As such, the fanatics seemed to consider us, for they made no movement to give us the encounter half way, as I had expected; and I could see heads brought close together, to confer in a whisper; probably in regard to the apparition of so many, when they had expected but two. Nevertheless, they remained drawn up across the road; and a moment after, their pistols also were brought forth from their holsters, and it became evident that hard blows were to be the order of the day.

I had not, for my own part, the slightest unwillingness to bring the matter to such a decision; but yet, as they stood there motionless on the very path we were to take, I confess I would have much preferred to give spurs to my horse, and force my way through at full gallop, rather than quietly ride up, and enter the strife with calm premeditation. My two companions, however, chose the latter method of proceeding; and without hurrying our pace in the least, we approached slowly till we almost touched our opponents.

At that moment, Monsieur du Tillet, as his friend had called him, fixing his eye sternly upon the least fanatical in dress of the other party, whose appearance I have before described, exclaimed, in a deep, imperative voice, "Clear the way!" and pushed his horse forward towards him.

The other instinctively made a movement to obey, but instantly recovering himself, he replied, "Stop thou, rather, man of Belial, and yield thyself to the servants of the Lord!"

At the same moment, he who had been called Habacuc, addressed himself to me, exclaiming, "What doest thou here, young man, consorting with the children of unrighteousness, and the priests of Baal—the worshippers of the harlot who sitteth on the seven hills? Verily I say unto thee, thy father and thy father's house have been suffered too long in the land. Ye shall be cast out, root and branch, if ye separate not yourselves from the followers of the beast, who would bring the abomination of desolation to sit in the holy places of our Israel."

All this passed in a moment; and while the mouth of Habacuc was still filled with the harlot and the beast, I heard the stern voice of Du Tillet repeat, "Clear the way! Walter Dixon, clear the way! or I will clear it for myself, as I have done of old, I tell thee!"

"And I tell thee thou shalt never see her more," replied the other, dropping at once his fanatical snuffle. "Take that to settle all!" and levelling the pistol he had in his hand towards Du Tillet's head, he fired. The ball whistled past my ear innocuous; and Walter Dixon, after a moment's pause, to see the effect of his shot, drew his sword and urged his charger against his adversary. Their blades crossed, and at the end of two or three lightning-like passes, the pseudo-puritan was rolling in the dust, while his horse ran masterless up the hill.

At the same time, Habacuc had spurred forward upon me; but we were both, I believe, unwilling to use the same deadly arms with which our companions were contending; and while he strove to grasp my collar and pull me off my horse, I struck him on the head with the butt-end of my pistol, a blow which drove in his steeple-crowned hat, and laid him on the ground beside his comrade. The other two buff jackets fled manfully from the gentleman in the periwig, aided by my two servants, one of whom could not refrain from firing a shot at the rotund nether man of a flying enemy, who escaped, however, unhurt; while we, on our part, without staying, Achilles-like, to spoil the fallen, rode forward at full speed, and were soon far from the scene of strife.

What to be done next, now became the question. I felt

myself called upon, by every principle of hospitality, to invite the two strangers to take shelter at Masterton House ; and the very particular inquiries which General St. Maur made concerning all the noblemen in the neighbourhood, but more especially my father, led me to imagine that such an invitation was expected. To ask any one to Lord Masterton's dwelling, however, without his command to that effect, was quite out of the question. I dared as well have struck my hand off ; and, obliged to refrain, I rode on with very hospitable feelings at my heart, but with manners, I am afraid, somewhat cold and disagreeable, from the restraint I was forced to put upon myself. Had my companions continued their route past the gates of the park, I should have found myself still more embarrassed ; but fortunately, at the first turning of the road, they relieved me from my difficulty, by thanking me for my warning and assistance, and bidding me farewell.

"We must forward, at full speed," said General St. Maur ; "and now, all that we will ask of you, my young friend, is, that you will let one of your servants ride a hundred yards with us on this road, to puzzle our pursuers if they try to trace us by our horses' footmarks. Your man can easily clear yon hedge, and cross that field, so as to join you on the other road."

I consented willingly ; and, with those contradictory feelings which so frequently torment us in our passage through life, I gladly saw two men depart in whom I was beginning to take a great interest, and of whom I would willingly have seen more.

My next consideration was, whether I should, or should not, tell my father the adventure I had met with at all ; and I fancied I could see his calm, cold eye, while I related what had happened, and the expression of total want of sympathy with the motives under which I had acted, which his countenance would assume as I narrated the occurrences of the morning.

I do not know what it is that stern men gain ; but, beyond a doubt, I had a thousand minds not to tell him a word, and let after-events take their chance ; but reflecting that such conduct would be cowardly, I summoned resolution, and on my arrival walked directly to his library.

He was reading when I entered, and for a moment read on ; but then, raising his eyes, he noticed me with an ominous "What is it, sir ?"

How I got through my story does not much matter, and I do not very well know ; but from the pure fright of the narrator, it became a long one, comprising a thousand particulars which might as well have been left out. My father did not help me in the least ; but continued to listen with the most imperturbable patience, and the most unmoved silence. Nevertheless, I got

through it at length; and then stood before him, ready for martyrdom.

"Habacuc!" he said, when I had concluded, "that must be Habacuc Grimstone, the Exeter magistrate—we shall soon hear more;" and he dropped his eyes to his book again.

Glad to be so easily relieved of my tale, I was quitting the room, when Lord Masterton again looked up, and there was an expression of greater energy in his countenance than I had heretofore seen. "Do not suppose, Harry," he said, "that I blame you for what you have done; it may—and must—hurry on the necessity of measures, which I have for some days seen that I shall be obliged ultimately to take. Personally, you acted well, and with spirit; although your interference in favour of two obscure royalists—for such must these two men be—will probably force me into a rupture with the fanatics sooner than I had intended. The army hold the king like an eagle in a cage, whom they will teach to strike the game for them if they can; but if the royal bird prove refractory, they will wring off his head. All good men are arming in his favour; and doubtless a slight display of force in his behalf, may compel his enemies to grant him such terms as will become him to accept. My own oath is registered against the service of an ungrateful king; but your brother and yourself shall be free to draw the sword in his defence, as soon as I have provided that your swords shall not want support. Now leave me."

I gladly obeyed, pleased and flattered by a degree of confidence which my father had never before evinced towards me. In the evening, a letter arrived from Habacuc Grimstone, which, as a party nearly concerned, Lord Masterton thought fit to show me, as well as his answer. The epistle of the fanatic magistrate was full of hypocritical insolence and unmannerly threats. He detailed my adventure of the morning, after his own fashion, and demanded that I should be sent to Exeter, to await in prison the sentence of God's saints upon me.

My father's reply was cool and politic. Doubting that Habacuc had any higher authority than his own for the arrest of two fugitives, he merely answered, that he had already reprimanded his son for his juvenile frolic, of which he accused him; and he informed the puritan, that if he would send up to him, as the superior magistrate, the warrant from the council of state for the arrest of the two persons, whose evasion from justice his son, he said, had favoured, he would be responsible for its due execution. Farther, he begged to inquire of Mr. Habacuc Grimstone, why he, a worthy and God-fearing man, had endeavoured to pull his son from horseback, by the collar, before his son had given him any provocation; and he desired

the magistrate to be ready to answer his questions thereon, when he should make his next monthly visitation to Exeter.

There being no force of any kind at Exeter at that time, the fanatic was fain not only to keep quiet, but to make some sort of concessions, especially, as we afterwards discovered that he had acted without any authority from the council of state. He took good care, however, to denounce my father as a malignant, against the effects of which denunciation Lord Masterton made preparations, which must be spoken of more fully.

CHAPTER IV.

No bustle, no clamour, no spurring here and there, announced to the world that Lord Masterton was preparing to take part in those general risings of the country, which the king's prolonged imprisonment and the increasing demands of the parliament had occasioned. In the first instance, my brother's servant, the saintly Gabriel Jones, was despatched with what he and the whole of the rest of the family conceived to be a private letter to Lord Capel, concerning a junction of our forces with his. The epistle, however, was afterwards found amongst that nobleman's papers, and proved to be an earnest and a positive request, that his lordship would abstain from all military efforts in favour of the imprisoned king. Whether Lord Capel had been prepared beforehand to receive it, and the whole business was merely a *ruse* to get the valet, whom we all suspected of treachery, out of the way, without the risk which would have been incurred by discharging him, I do not know; but, at all events, it answered that purpose; and Gabriel, who was absent three times the number of days which was necessary for his journey, probably carried to the council of state a letter which completely calmed them in regard to the proceedings of my father.

Every tenant on the estate was well known in regard to his principles; and many of the farmers' sons had joined the royalist forces on former occasions. Several, indeed, had been made prisoners by the parliamentary troops, and only owed their deliverance from the terrible fate of being sold to slavery by their conquerors, to the influence of my father's name. Such as had served before were appointed to drill as speedily as possible those who had not, but in very small parties, choosing remote places in the woods, or on the sands; while many a moonlight review on the lawns near the house completed the

discipline of the troops we were raising—as far as discipline could be attained in our circumstances. Each farmer taught his horse to stand fire in his own stable; and each kitchen over the whole estate became a practising hall for the broadsword.

Arms and accoutrements were not wanting; but these, as well as our communications from other royalists in different parts of the country, were conveyed by sea. By the same means a considerable body of tenantry, from our family estates in Dorsetshire, were brought to Masterton House; so that, at the end of a month, besides the number necessary to keep the house during our absence, we could muster nearly five hundred men, ready to march, well armed and mounted, and far better disciplined than most of the cavalier regiments of the day.

My father still adhered to his determination of never drawing his sword for the monarch who had disgraced him. He would defend Masterton House, he said, to the last, if it were attacked, but he would not march from its hearth for a king who neither deserved nor desired his service. The regiment we had privately raised was called my brother's; but one troop of a hundred men was especially entrusted to me by my father; and, in our midnight reviews, I took a pride in rendering it more perfect and accurate in all the manœuvres than the rest. Indeed, although in point of talent and skill my brother was far better qualified to command than myself, there was many a young yeoman who would have willingly volunteered into Master Harry's troop, after its roll was full. One circumstance, however, surprised me not a little, which was, that my father insisted I should reserve one saddle for Gabriel Jones, my brother's servant, whose natural place seemed near his master's person. This was afterwards explained to Frank in my hearing.

"Your valet, Frank," said Lord Masterton, in speaking on the subject, "is, as you know, a most notorious villain. He was given to me by Fairfax, who—as honest a block of living stone as this world ever produced—thought that he was conferring a signal favour on my family, by introducing into it a fellow that could exquisitely dress hair, tie a point, or cut a rose for a shoe, and yet could edify us all by the unctious of his saintly doctrine. I know him for a spy, and yet I send him with you, because, as you are going suddenly to a strange part of the world, where his means of communication will be cut off, he cannot do the harm he could here: yet I put him into Harry's troop, that he may have a watchful eye upon him in the field, and during the march, while you, Frank, can keep him always near you, at other times, in his capacity of valet."

Such an explanation from my father, who seldom gave an

explanation of anything he thought right to be done, was, of course, quite sufficient to satisfy me, and more than sufficient to satisfy my brother, who received his parent's commands with even more unquestioning obedience than myself.

All our arrangements, however, were nearly complete before Master Gabriel Jones thought fit to return, and had we not been forced to wait for news from Lord Norwich, and from Hales, who were actively preparing the insurrection of Kent, that worthy would have been obliged to march within two days after his arrival. Even during the seven days that we were thus compelled to pause, he was watched so narrowly by all the household, that he only contrived to absent himself for a part of one day, which he spent in visiting Exeter. That city indeed was, for the time, no place of great safety for a puritan of any cast. The members of the parliamentary committee which were appointed to sit there for Devonshire, had been forced to betake themselves to Exmouth, and multitudes of people, parading the streets, menaced with death every round-head they met, shouting, "God and the King! God and the King!" before all the principal public buildings.

This news was brought by Gabriel himself; and a somewhat sudden and suspicious change made itself manifest in his political opinions from that moment; as he assured his master, that his heart was moved with compassion and sympathy, on hearing the poor suffering people so exclaim from their very bowels, to be restored to the ancient rule under which they had lived in peace and happiness.

Frank, however, was not a person to be taken in by sudden conversions; and he noticed the present one to me in his calm but bitter manner, which was always the more cutting, because he seemed rather to repress than encourage the sneering turn of his lip, that accompanied involuntarily some even of his kindest speeches.

"My knave Gabriel pities the King," he remarked, "almost as much as you do, Harry; and he is enthusiastic, too, as you are. Watch him well, therefore, on the road, like a good boy; and, as you will most likely understand each other's characters, if you see any symptoms of his loving the King so well as to long to visit him at the Isle of Wight, or to consult for his safety with the Parliament in London, just send a pistol-ball through his head. Or, if you be afraid, I will do it with good will."

To our surprise, however, Gabriel Jones showed no unwillingness to accompany us on our expedition; and having served in the army in former days, proved himself as active and ready a trooper as any in the regiment.

At length the expected letter from Lord Norwich arrived, and we determined to begin our march the same night. Then came the most painful affair of all, the parting. The excitement and bustle of preparation had hitherto covered over with a dazzling ripple all that was to be apprehended in the expedition on which we were bound—all that was dark—all that was sorrowful. Hope, a goddess that especially smiles on activity, had promised everything fair and glorious, as the result of our expedition; but at the moment of parting, a thousand dim, shadowy fears rose up between us and hope, like storm clouds rolling over the bright moon. Success, or death, or exile, were the only alternatives which the fortunes of those days afforded to such as mingled in the eager struggle of civil war. The block and the axe, the prison, the deadly platoon, were dooms for those who yielded; and, as is ever the case in intestine strife, cruelty and revenge took the robe and sword which equity and justice had cast down in their flight. To us, who reflected, a thousand fearful spectres gibbered in the obscure vista of the future; and the gay unthinking mirth of the good yeomen who followed us was envied by their more mental lords.

My brother and myself were quitting our paternal hearth for the first time, and that for the purpose of sharing in the most bloody strife that ever disfigured our native land.* The conviction, therefore, could not but arise in our bosoms, that youth's epoch of peace and happiness was past, and that, even at the best, all which now lay before us was the turbulent struggle of manhood, and the decrepit feebleness of age. At the same time, a host of dangers, difficulties, cares, and disappointments—the brood of that shapeless monster Probability—barked at our heels, as we set out from the threshold of what had hitherto been our home.

From my father we parted almost in silence. A few stern words of injunction, counsel, and warning—the sterner because they covered deeper and softer feelings—were all that he ventured. From Emily the parting was more painful still. My father sent us forth and shared our motives; but Emily could not comprehend why any man should leave home, and peace, and happiness, to risk the breaking of his dearest ties, to stake

* In this point Master Harry Masterton was mistaken; for though cruelties enough, and baseness enough, were committed in the wars of the great Rebellion to make the blood run cold in the veins of any one who never read a true account of the first French Revolution—after that, one's blood is frozen for life, if it do not boil all the time with indignation—yet the wars of the two Roses would appear to have been more sanguinary, when compared with the population of the country, than those of which we speak.

his life upon an uncertain cast, to peril fortune, hope, and the future, to shed his own blood, and to spill his fellow-creature's.

She stood upon the steps of the door, while the servants held the horses and a torch. My brother took leave of her first, and simply shook hands with her. I thought that their relative situation and our near intimacy might have ventured more, but, of course, I could not exceed the measure of her promised husband's familiarity, and I, too, merely pressed her hand. I could see the tears streaming from her eyes by the red torch-light; and as my fingers closed thrilling upon hers, with a sensation that ran through my whole frame, I could see the blood mount up into her beautiful cheek, fade away again, like the sunshine withdrawn from an evening cloud, as the wind wafts it afar; and the next moment, she reeled and would have fallen, had she not caught the iron balustrade for support.

My brother was by this time on his horse: I sprang down the steps and followed. A little farther on was the regiment in marching order; the torch was extinguished, the word was given, and in a few minutes we were winding along through the narrow dark avenue, with hearts somewhat sadder than we had expected the day before.

The conduct of the march had, of course, been given to my brother; and the plans of the approaching efforts in the king's favour had been communicated to him as far as Lord Holland and Lord Norwich had thought prudent. I was not so far trusted, only knowing that we were to advance with all speed, to effect our junction with Goring and Hales, in Kent; and if prevented from doing so, to fall back upon Wales, which had already raised the royal standard. In either case, a long and difficult march was before us, where dangers were innumerable, and difficulties immense. Activity, however, was everything, for the whole hope of Lord Norwich was founded on the reinforcements which had been promised him from different parts of the country, and of which our regiment formed a very considerable part.

To do my brother Frank but bare justice, never did the most experienced commander conduct his march with more skill and expedition than marked our advance. His object was to avoid all encounters till he had joined Goring,* but, nevertheless, to cut through every obstacle till he had effected that junction; and so well did he contrive his route, that for five days we met with no opposition whatever. His means of information, arranged with that skill and clearness which he displayed in

* George Goring, Lord Norwich: for a fuller account of whom, see Clarendon's Hist., vol. vi. pp. 56, 58. &c. Ed. 1826.

everything and on all occasions, never left him without a complete knowledge of each hostile party that hovered about the country. Not a local magistrate moved, not a body of militia was ordered out, but he had early notice; and, at the same time, he took care that no tidings of any of our intended motions should reach the enemy, for neither soldier nor officer of the whole regiment knew, on beginning his day's march, where his halting-place would be at night.

At length, one morning, at the little village of Barford, where we had halted the evening before, we received information that a large body of the parliamentary troops had arrived the day before at Salisbury; and as we were just about to march, we learned that, in expectation of our advance, Hornsby, who commanded them, had taken up a position on the other side of the Wily bourne, which runs between Fisherton and Wilton. The number of the enemy was said to be two thousand; and, making all allowances for exaggeration, this was deemed by far too superior a force to encounter if it could be avoided. Striking off, therefore, to the left, we made a movement upon Amesbury; and, advancing as rapidly as possible, soon reached a spot where the high road, winding round a hill, passed along the side of the ascent, leaving a deep-wooded hollow below, with a wide plain beyond, which was again broken by a Roman camp and various ancient tumuli. On the right hand of the hill lay the line of another road, old, steep, and narrow; and which appeared to have been disused in favour of the better path on the left; but as this seemed the most private and concealed, Frank determined upon following it, till we had passed the dangerous part of our march.

This resolution, however, was shaken, as he and I advanced a little before the head of the regiment, by seeing a horseman riding slowly on before us. We instantly paused to remark him, and a moment after we saw him halt, dismount, advance towards an angle of the road, and while his horse, seemingly taught to such manœuvres, stood stock still, he pressed himself close up against the bank, and appeared to examine cautiously the country beyond the turn of the hill.

A moment satisfied him, and returning as quietly as he had advanced, he mounted his charger, and putting him on the turf at the side, rode speedily back. The sight of my brother and myself, however, with the head of the regiment, which was now beginning to appear behind us, seemed to startle him; and he again drew in his rein; but immediately after spurred forward, as if to accost us.

Every step that he took in advance, his figure became more familiar to my memory. For an instant, indeed, I could not

tell where I had seen him, but before he was close up with us, I had just time to say, "Have a care, Frank! have a care! This is that Walter Dixon, whom I found consorting with the fanatics in Bewley Wood."

It was indeed the same person. He was paler than when I before saw him; and the sleeve of his coat, which was no longer of buff, but of good morone cloth, was cut up at the back, and tied with black ribands, as if to give space for the dressing of a wound. He seemed to have full use of his arm, however, and apparently suffered little inconvenience from the injury he had so lately received.

"Halt your troop, gentlemen! For God's sake halt your troop, if ye be friends of King Charles," he exclaimed, as he came near. "The right of Hornsby's cavalry is resting on the little wood at the end of that road; and if ye advance, ye are cut to pieces."

Frank eyed him from head to foot with no very cordial glance. "You seem mightily afraid of fanatics, good sir," he replied, "considering the society in which my brother last had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Without your brother could know, sir," replied the other, with perfect calmness, "what were my motives for consorting with fanatics for the time, neither he nor you can judge whether I have reason to fear them or not. However, there is no room now for wasting words. We shall have reconnoitring parties on us soon. If you come minded to give Hornsby battle, on! You will find him straight before you. But if ye be sane men, and with your handful here would avoid an encounter with an adverse force that more than trebles your numbers, follow me down into the valley."

"Hold, sir," replied my brother; "this matter is not so easily settled. You are either a friend or an enemy. If the former, you shall have my thanks, when I have proved you. If the latter, you are a spy, and seek to deceive us; and the meed of such conduct is death. Take four troopers, Harry, ride down with this fair gentleman on the road he proposes to lead us. If you find all clear, send back one of the men to me. I will wait under the hill. If you find he betrays you, send a ball through his head, and ride back with all speed."

"You use scanty ceremony, sir," replied Walter Dixon, with a frown.

"I have no time to be polite, sir," answered Frank; "but doubtless my brother, who is of a more courtly nature, if he find you false, will make you a bow when he blows your brains out."

"Well, it matters not!" replied the other; "it is not you I

serve." A few words more of such altercation ensued, but our new companion was fain to obey; and, accompanied by myself and four of my troop, he rode down a narrow path into a wood that skirted the bottom of the hill.

"Why not take the road over the plain?" demanded I, as we proceeded. "This would be a sweet spot for cavalry to be attacked. Jump down and beat yon bushes, William Fells."

The stranger smiled:—"Do not be so suspicious, young gentleman," he said. "When last I met you, I had my own purposes to answer, in consorting with Habacuc Grimstone and his companions. It might be interest, it might be safety, it might be revenge, that made me use them; but I have no such motives now. I do not take the road over the plain, because I know every inch of this county: and I am sure, from that knowledge, that Hornsby's troopers on the elbow of the hill could see a curlew fly from any one barrow to the other, far more a regiment of cavalry, wearing King Charles's colours. Now, if you remark, this belt of wood would cover the march of two thousand men, till, opening out safe yonder, on the Amesbury road, far out of sight of the enemy, it leaves Hornsby and his roundheads in the rear, watching till night fall, for what will never come. Do you see my reason now?"

What he said was plausible; and I remembered his exclamation when about to fire at Du Tillet,—*"Thou shalt never see her more,"* which certainly corroborated the idea that some personal motive, very distinct from political party, had united him for the time with the puritans. I was resolved to trust to nothing but my own eyes, however; and accordingly proceeded till we regained the high road, where I could see for more than a mile, on every side, without the possibility of ambush. I then confessed myself satisfied; and thanking the stranger for his courtesy, dispatched a trooper to inform my brother of the result.

"I suppose, then, that now you have no objection to my proceeding on my way?" demanded my companion; "for with four armed men round me, of course I must obey their commands."

I acknowledge, his question embarrassed me not a little; for, after the proof he had just given of his sincerity, to doubt him farther was an insult; and yet, I could not entirely divest my mind of a suspicion, that he might have some latent motive in his desire to proceed, to which it might be detrimental for us to yield.

He remarked the thoughtful pause which these feelings occasioned, with a smile.—*"Well, well,"* said he, "if you have no authority to release me, it matters little. My business is not so urgent as that it may not tarry for half an hour; and now I be-

think me, for guiding you thus safely, I shall ask leave to travel under your escort for some short way."

Of all sorts of hypocrisy—and God knows there is a lamentable number in this world—the affectation of frankness is the surest birdlime for a green youth. Prepossessed as I was against Master Walter Dixon, the easy boldness of his manner, supported, as it appeared, by one instance of evident good service, went far to do away all prejudices; and after assuring him, on my own responsibility, that he would be free to accompany or to quit us, I remained in conversation with him, till my brother and the rest of our force came up.

During that pause he turned the conversation himself to our former rencontre. "Although I can hardly speak of it with patience," he said, "for your interference cut me off from my only chance of revenging a base injury, yet I think it worth while to explain how I—who was never a puritan or a parliamentarian, even before that party's late barefaced rejection of all decency—how I came to make use of my good cousin Habacue Grimstone for the arrest of that villain whose name shall not embitter my lips. That old man with whom you were consorting," he continued, "who, God knows, should long ago have done with such toys, must needs, some five years since, become my rival with a young lady promised to me by every vow, but that of marriage, which can bind woman to man. He injured me deeply, and I vowed revenge; nor have I ever forgotten that vow. He stepped in between me and what should have been mine, and I resolved that he should pay dearly for so doing. Years have passed over, and he was long a sojourner in another land, but I did not forget my vow, even while his steps were afar; and he was well watched for me, when I could not watch him myself. But here come the troopers—I have only farther to say, that I heard of his landing in England, marked my occasion, but found him accompanied by another. I then joined with Habacue to take him as a malignant, a catholic, and a traitor. I heed not who knows it, my desire was revenge, however obtained. I hoped, indeed, that my own arm might deal the blow—but I thought myself sure, that even if I failed or fell, he would suffer—when your cursed interference saved him, and nearly ruined me; for the royalist papers found on my person during my sickness from the wound I then received, caused me to be denounced as a bitter malignant, and my escape is next to a miracle."

He spoke quickly, to conclude his story before the arrival of my brother, who was now coming rapidly up, at the head of the regiment. This tale, however, brief as it was, greatly changed my opinion of my momentary acquaintance Du Tillet, and I

would fain have had Frank say something to do away the rude suspicion which we had both manifested towards our new comrade. But my brother, whether from shyness, or what other cause, I know not, while he could give a command with clearness and force, or reason on a proposition at length, or point a reply with the most bitter sarcasm, could never bring himself to ask a favour or offer a compliment, or even express a kindly feeling, with graceful ease. I have, indeed, seen moments, which I shall have to notice more hereafter, when the emotions of his heart overcame reserve, and burst forth with splendid energy; but without they were excited to a high pitch, they seemed rather to embarrass than to support him; and I heard him once say, that his head could always take care of itself, but his heart was the greatest bungler he ever met with.

On the present occasion he found that he had done the stranger some wrong, and would willingly have offered an apology; but what he said was lame and impotent enough.

"Mention it not! mention it not!" said Walter Dixon, who seemed to have talked himself into good humour. "If you carried caution almost into folly, the loss had nearly been your own."

His request was then made that he might be permitted to take advantage of the march of our cavalry, which was readily granted—my brother, nevertheless, taking the precaution to ask how far we were to be honoured with his company.

"Not very far, in faith," replied Walter Dixon. "We shall part, probably, at Basingstoke; for I cut across the country by Milford and Horsham into Kent, and you are bound for Essex, I hear."

Frank, with his usual caution, replied nothing; and inwardly resolving to take advantage of the stranger's knowledge of the country as far as possible, left him still in perfect ignorance of his route.

Walter Dixon, however, gained upon my brother's esteem. There was a ready boldness in his demeanour, that soon put Frank at his ease; and also somewhat of a rude method of opposing everything that was said to him, which soon involved him in a logical dispute with my brother, and left them the best friends in the world. To say the truth, I began to esteem more than to like him; for his bluntness was sometimes offensive. He would scoff at things that all sects held sacred, and, with a keen and cutting rapidity, seemed to go direct to the point of his argument, without any reverence to prejudices or feelings. Nevertheless, to make up, though few propositions met his assent, and though he had a most merciless disregard for the opinion of others, he generally contrived to leave you tolerably

well satisfied with yourself, by extolling those virtues or talents of which you fancied yourself possessed.

Whether this was casual or intentional, I know not; but I soon remarked, that one range of human qualities formed the subject of his praise to my brother, and another to myself, though, Heaven knows we neither of us could say he flattered us. Thus he proceeded for several days, growing upon our regard. At Basingstoke, Master Dixon appeared somewhat surprised when he learned our intention of following (for some part of the way at least) the same road with himself; assured my brother that he was very wrong in leading his troops into Kent; and declared that, to the best of his judgment, the only stand which the royalists could hope to make successfully would be in Essex. Nevertheless, he sneered at men who could be changed by every breath of opinion, and laughed at the shrewdness with which Frank had deceived him in regard to the direction of his march, observing, "I am not so easily gulled in general."

We met with no opposition on our march, after leaving Amesbury, till we reached an open common near East Grinstead, where we encountered a large party of militia, drawn up on a rise, with rather a formidable aspect. It was the *coup d'essai* of almost every person present; and I cannot but confess that, without the slightest fear, my heart beat both quick and hard, as my eye ran over the bristling line of pikes, which bade fair to wait our charge with all the patience in the world. After a few sentences of encouragement, my brother gave the word, and on we went against them at full speed; but it so happened that the militiamen were a great deal more raw and inexperienced than ourselves. They waited with white faces and jostling shoulders, till we came within about twenty paces of their line; then throwing down their pikes to a man, they took to their heels, and, in a body, dashed over a hedge and ditch, near which they had been placed with a view to guard their flank. Only one man was killed, and only one wounded, on the occasion. The first was an unfortunate parliamentarian, who seemed rooted to the spot with surprise, when he recognised Master Dixon, who charged by my side at the head of the troop.

I could just hear that he was pouring forth an objurcation in which the words, "Master Dixon! Master Dixon!" were predominant, ere he prepared to run with his fellows; but the person he addressed made his horse bound forward three or four yards before the regiment, and exclaiming, "Take that to stop your babbling," dealt him a blow which bit many an inch into his skull.

The only person wounded was my brother; the fleshy part

of whose arm was slightly injured by a pistol ball, which the commander of the militia thought himself bound to discharge before he headed his men in the rapid evolution with which they cleared the hedge, and dispersed over the country.

Lest the re-union of our flying enemy, and their junction with other bodies of the parliamentary troops, which we heard of in the neighbourhood of East Grinstead, should produce more formidable opposition, we marched on for nearly sixteen miles farther, towards Lamberhurst, where Master Dixon assured us we might halt in security. As the horses were tired, however, we determined to pause at a little sequestered village on the way, which offered a picture of peace and tranquillity, unspeakably refreshing after the toils, anxieties, and cares of a long and difficult march, through a country wasted with civil war, and replete with strife. But of it I must give a more detailed account than can be afforded at the end of a chapter.

CHAPTER V.

THE scene in which we halted was peculiarly English; many lands and many beautiful spots have I visited since, without seeing anything in the least like it, and yet it is difficult to tell wherein the particular distinction lay.

Winding down the slope of an easy hill, the smooth, broad road opened out upon a village green, with a large glistening pond on the right, shaded by tall elms, several clumps of which were scattered round. Forty or fifty neat cottages surrounded the green; and a long row of plain white houses went skirting down by the side of the road as it pursued its course into the country beyond. On the left hand, as we descended, rose the spire of the church from a group of immemorial trees, whose rounded masses broke beautifully the somewhat heavy architecture of the body of the building; and about half a mile distant, on the right, in the full light of the evening sun, appeared a large and lordly dwelling, surrounded by the deep woods, which crowned a wide sloping lawn, only separated from the village by a thick brick wall. Farther still, beyond, through an opening left between the trees and the hill, rose a high rocky piece of ground, covered by the grey ruins of an old feudal castle; and there seemed, to the eye of fancy, a moral propriety in the arrangement of the whole scene that enhanced its beauty. The cottages gathered round the foot of the more wealthy dwelling—that dwelling itself rising out of the midst of them—the house

of prayer standing near at hand; and far beyond the grey and crumbling fragments of feudal tyranny, commenting on the change of days, and monumenting the evils of the past. The whole had a vague reference to the state of society which existed before the civil war broke out, and perhaps the image was the more pleasing to me from its very indistinctness.

Probably the difference between the aspect of England and that of every other land, may consist more in the appearance of contented industry than in anything else—and that industry evinced, not in the actual exertions one witnesses, but in their results. The neatness of the cottage, however lowly, the pains bestowed to render it clean, the ornamental plants, however simple, which are taught to give a grace to the humblest dwelling, as well as a thousand other things which bespeak habitual activity and care, all breathe the spirit of willing, healthful, happy exertion, betokening a high degree of that best of intellectual gifts—contentment,—that sweet calm sunshine of existence, compared with which, the brightest wit is but a flash, the purest of ambitions but a dream indeed. No, no! there is but one ambition that is worth a hope, and it lies beyond the grave.

The whole scene spoke comfort and repose. It was so calm it might have been almost sad, had not half a dozen merry voices risen up and mingled not unmelodious with the notes of the blackbird pouring from the trees on the hill.

As we came down, all the villagers were turned out to see us approach; and the fearlessness with which they did so, confirmed what the appearance of the place had before announced, that its remote and sequestered situation had sheltered it completely from the storm of civil war. We were welcomed gladly, for we found that the population were loyalists at heart; and, retiring into the little public house, my brother and myself proceeded to allot our men to the different villagers and farmers, who, as we had no tents, undertook readily to house our troopers in barns and lofts, and to receive the officers in their own dwellings.

We here, for the first time, heard news of Lord Norwich, who was, it appeared, within twenty miles of us; but Walter Dixon, who was now about to leave us, brought in a peasant who had seen the parliamentary force under Major General Skippon, partially interposed between us and the cavaliers. At first, Dixon strongly counselled my brother to make a bold push, and try to cut his way through Skippon's corps; but afterwards changed his opinion, on learning that the parliamentary force amounted to near five thousand men: and agreed with Frank and the other officers, that it would be better to communicate

with Lord Norwich or Hales, previous to taking any rash step, especially as by forced marches we had arrived at least three days before we could be expected. As soon as this was settled, Dixon took leave of us, with many a profession of regard; promising at the same time, if he could obtain any intelligence as he passed towards Canterbury, to make every effort to send it to us; and whenever he had concluded the business on which he went, to return and join us with what men he might be able to collect.

The next proceeding was, much against his own liking, to cut the hair of my servant, William Fells, to clothe him in a plain suit of grey, and to despatch him to find out Lord Norwich. Though a resolute fellow, and as shrewd as the north wind, we did not trust him with any written communication; but merely charged him to tell the General of our arrival, and to bring us farther orders with all speed. He did not depart, however, forthwith; and so great a change had the sanctification of his apparel wrought on my man, that I hardly knew him when, after a few minutes' absence, he came up to me, as I was standing alone, and begged to speak with me for a moment.

"So please you, sir," said he, after some circumlocutions, "far be it from me to speak ill of my fellow-servants—far less my fellow-soldiers; but I cannot help hoping your honour will look after Master Gabriel Jones. There is no harm, I dare say, in Master Walter Dixon either; but he and Jones have had a full hour's talk every night since first he joined us; and they had a short one too before Master Dixon went this evening. I know of no evil, certainly; but, perchance, your honour may look to the matter. I did not like to speak to the Colonel, for he is so stern like; neither, indeed, was it my place: but your honour being Captain of the troop——"

All servants have, I have remarked, a wonderful pleasure in revealing useful information when it is too late; though they take care to conceal everything they see amiss while their information can be of any service to their masters. I was therefore obliged to take the tidings William Fells gave me, without grumbling, though he had been silent till Walter Dixon's departure rendered them of no great value.

"Well, well! William, I will look to it," I replied; and accordingly, as the only means of turning the information I had received to any account, before the day was half an hour older, I called Master Gabriel to me, and asked him suddenly the nature of his conversation that evening with our late companion. I thought I could distinguish, at first, a certain rosy hue springing up in that worthy's cheeks, unlike their usual sallow tint, and rather indicative of detection; but, whether he

had anything to conceal or not, Gabriel Jones was never at fault for a lie; and looking up in a moment with a placid expression of benign satisfaction, he replied:—

“I was giving him the receipt for the salve, sir—praised be God, that made me the humble instrument of helping a fellow-creature; and, moreover, one who, though once a bitter malignant, is now inclined worthily to restore the monarchy upon a reasonable and restricted basis, like your honour and other well-disposed persons. I could say something upon that score, if your honour were inclined to listen—something touching the kingdom of Christ. I could pour forth manna and fatness,—salve—not alone such as that which heals the wounds of the flesh, like that which nightly I applied to the shoulder of sweet Walter Dixon; but salve that cures the bruised spirit. I could—yae, verily, I could——”

“Stop, stop! good Gabriel,” interrupted I, “pour it not forth upon me; for at present, neither is my spirit bruised, nor is my stomach disposed for manna or fatness; but rather follow to the public-house, since all things are prepared to guard against surprise, and serve your master, who is there, probably waiting for his dinner, with as keen an appetite as I have.”

Gabriel ventured no reply; but, casting up his eyes with that mingled look of pitying contempt and self-righteous sorrow which is ever the refuge of the fanatic and hypocrite when he cannot or dare not answer, he followed to the house of general entertainment, and prepared to do the office of carver, which had been imposed upon him since we left Masterton House, partly from the scantiness of unemployed attendants—partly to keep the worthy valet’s talents for intrigue out of mischief by sufficient occupation. On the present occasion, however, before the table was cumbered with the *pabulum* whereon to exercise his arm, a strange servant appeared, in rich but tasteful livery, craving, with soft and well-tutored inflections, to speak with Colonel Masterton, if such were the name of the officer commanding his majesty’s loyal regiment of cavalry, then at Penford-bourne. When brought to my brother, and bade to deliver his message, he informed him that the Lady Eleanor Fleming, the lady of the manor, having notice that the two sons of Lord Masterton were then in the village, leading a regiment of cavalry to reinforce Lord Goring, she prayed them, for kindness and courtesy’s sake, to use her house as their home, during the time of their stay, and to command her means in any way which might prove useful to the cause in which they were engaged.

So polite a message required a polite reply, and my brother begged the messenger to inform his lady, that, as soon as possible, either his brother or himself would wait upon her, to

thank her personally for her courteous attention. He pointed out, however, that some time must necessarily be spent in quartering his troops, and guarding against all dangers during the night; and he enlarged upon the difficulties of his office so pointedly, that I very well divined he intended to put on me the task of complimenting the lady of the house in his name.

Against this, however, I determined resolutely to set my face; not that I shared the least in Frank's constitutional shyness; for at that time of my being, full of youth and health and fearlessness, I do not think I should have minded presenting myself to angel or fiend, or should have felt more awed by the one than scared by the other. But as far as my brother's character had hitherto been called forth, I knew it well; and the moment that, as I expected, he began to hint, after the servant's departure, that it would be better for me to go, I burst into a laugh, and positively refused. Perceiving clearly that I had anticipated his design, he laughed himself; but persisted in trying by every means to induce me to undertake the task, using the authoritative tone of elder brother, of heir apparent, and of commanding officer, coaxing and threatening by turns; but all in vain. I was resolute in my disobedience; and at length, obliged to master his shyness, he set out on foot, insisting at least that I should accompany him, to which I very readily assented.

We were soon in the avenue leading to the house. The long broad gravel walk along which we bent our steps was by this time checkered by the moonbeams, and a single star was seen in the clear blue sky following the earth's bright partner, like an attendant. A solitary nightingale, too, pealed its many-melodized voice out of the woods hard by, and every lapse of its sweet song seemed designed to make the notes that followed sound sweeter still, by the dull silence of the momentary pause. It was then the height of the month of June, and there was a languid softness in the air that seemed to unknit the limbs, and even, touching the mind as well as the body, to soften every vigorous resolution of the soul. It was one of those sweet but enervating evenings when a man feels that he could refuse nothing if asked by beautiful lips and a tuneful voice—nothing on earth! My brother felt it as well as I; but he would not own it, and laughed at the wild nonsense that I talked as we walked along.

"Well, Harry," said he, on approaching the house, "if the air have such power of love in its soft breath, and if your heart be so very tender, you will here have a fine opportunity of falling in love—an experiment which every young cavalier of course desires to make. The widowed mistress of this mansion, they tell me, is fair; and doubtless forty, according to the old

alliteration: and marry! but it would be a suitable match for a mad youth of eighteen! Say, does the spirit move thee that way? as Gabriel Jones would phrase it; or would you rather still preserve your liberty, and gambol through all the mazes of your wild youthfulness, like that hare upon the lawn? See how she doubles along the dewy grass, and now sits up in the moonlight, listening to hear what mad mortals are giving a voice to this still grove. 'Tis I, mistress puss, who never yet loved anything on earth; and my poor brother, whose touchwood heart would be kindled into a flame by the lustre of any young wench's black eye, from the Scottish border to Beachy Head. Now, own, Harry Masterton, that a strain of music from yon open window, where you see the light, would complete your ecstacy, and render you perfectly fatuous."

As he spoke—whether he had caught the first preluding tones or not, I do not know—but as he spoke, the sounds of a lute came floating upon the air; and in a moment after, a fine melodious voice was heard singing, though the words escaped us. Some of the notes, too, were lost in the distance, or heard so indistinctly that they formed but a low connecting murmur of sweet sounds, joining, as it were, the silence to the song; but still we could catch the rise and fall of the air, and every now and then the clear mellow swell of the singer's voice poured the tide of music full upon our ear, and certainly did complete the magic of the season, and the hour, and the scene.

Frank paused to listen; for no man was more susceptible to the influence of music than himself; and I have sometimes been tempted to believe, that the internal conviction of being over susceptible to everything, was the latent cause of the reserve and indifference that he assumed on subjects which I knew to be connected deeply with the most powerful feelings of his heart.

"She sings divinely," said he, after listening a moment. "Come, Harry, let us see this syren:" and with a bold effort, he walked up to the door of the house, and entered a hall, in which a large party of servants were gathered together. All were instantly on their feet to do us reverence; and our names being given, we were led, with a certain degree of ostentation, which might originate in either the lackey or his mistress, through several splendid rooms, in which were a number of fine paintings. But at length the door of a large chamber, filled with a multitude of odoriferous plants, was thrown open, and we saw before us the lady of the mansion.

The lamps in the room were so disposed as to shed a general light over its whole extent, sufficient for every ordinary purpose, but faint and delicate, like the perfume of the plants with which

it was mingled. Under its soft influence—though placed at one of the farther windows, which the beams of the planet gleamed past, but did not enter, with a lute resting on the floor beside her, and supporting her left hand, which hung languidly by her side—sat a lady, the easy line of whose half-reclining figure, as she gazed forth upon the moon, might have vied with the choicest efforts of art. Yet the attitude was so perfectly natural, so mingled of grace and simplicity, that it was only like that of a lovely child in one of its moments of transient repose. The sound of our steps roused her from her reverie; and rising gracefully, she dropped the head of the lute against the pile of cushions on which she had been sitting, and advanced a few steps to meet us.

Never, certainly, did I behold a more beautiful creature than the being who stood before us at that moment. What she might have been a few years earlier, I know not; but I can hardly suppose she was so lovely as she then appeared, though with her the first budding charm of girlhood was gone. She was still, it is true, in the spring of life, and had never known an hour of that withering autumn which strips us of our green freshness; but it was the spring verging into the summer. She had perhaps counted eight-and-twenty years; but it seemed as if those years had been the handmaids to her beauty, and each had added some new grace. Tall, and probably, as a girl, very slim, she had now acquired a rounded fulness in every limb, which painters, I believe, call contour. There was nought of heaviness about it; all the graceful delicacy of form remained—the small foot and ankle; the soft, slender wrist, and taper fingers; the waist of scarce a span; while the rest of the figure swelled with an easy line of exquisite symmetry into the full beauty of maturity. Her features were small and regular; cut in the most exact proportion, yet soft; though so clearly defined and exquisitely modelled, that on the straight nose and arching upper lip one might have fancied traces of some sculptor's chisel, before the madness of passion had wished the lovely statue into life. The eyes were deep, deep blue; but the length of the dark eyelashes by which they were shaded, made them appear almost black. They were of that kind which generally seems cold and freezing till lighted by some ardent passion, and then shines forth all fire and soul. Hers, however, never, that I saw, bore that look of coldness; while her lips seemed formed to express joy; and in an hour, I have beheld a hundred different shades of pleased expression hang sporting on their ruby arch—from the soft, almost pensive smile, which took its tone from the pure colour of her eyes, to the gay laugh whose merry music rang gladdening to the very heart.

Her dress exposed more of her figure than I was accustomed to see displayed, and it struck me strangely, as if something had been forgotten—but who could regard her dress, when she herself was there?

With ease and courtesy, she advanced to meet us; and giving her hand to my brother, bade him welcome. As she did so, she fixed her eyes upon his fine features and broad splendid brow; and there seemed something that struck her much in his aspect, for her gaze was succeeded by a deep crimson blush, and a momentary embarrassment, which added to that under which he himself laboured.

It passed away, however, in an instant: and turning to me, she welcomed me also to her house, declaring how delighted she was to see us; how high were her hopes that the cause of royalty might triumph, supported as it now was by all that was noble and gallant in the nation; and now sincerely she prayed that she might have our society for some days longer.

My brother replied briefly; but his eyes seemed from the first to have caught fire from hers; and never did I behold such admiration in his looks before. Something in the presence of that lovely woman appeared to have called forth the energies that slumbered in his bosom; and while the desire of pleasing prompted the endeavour to please, the degree of timidity which her manner towards him evinced, gave him that confidence which was all that his own demeanour ever wanted. All that he said, too, during the course of the evening, was as clear, distinct, and well expressed, as if it had been composed before hand; and while he spoke, she seemed to drink in the tones of his voice with an eager attention, which offered a honied flattery that no language could have rendered sweeter.

What she had expected to meet with, I do not well know—whether she had thought to see in Colonel Masterton some swaggering cavalier or raw soldier, full of great oaths and strange excesses, or had pictured to herself one of those mere machines of war, which have no more business in a saloon than a cannon—but at all events, it was evident that she was surprised, and that the nature of her surprise was no way disagreeable. From it she soon recovered, however, and resumed that easy tone of high and finished courtesy which was habitual to her. Not that the polished tone—which generalizes all common minds—had deprived her demeanour of the peculiar and distinctive character which strong feeling or strong intellect preserves under any education.

In her manners there was a softness, an ease, and a kindness, which I defy reserve or shyness, however rooted, to have resisted; and her conversation was so varied—at times so gay,

without being noisy, and at others so feeling, without being sad, that whatever was the character of her hearer's mind, whatever was his mood at the moment, he could not help finding something in harmony with his own sensations—something to touch, to interest, or to amuse. She was indeed a syren, as Frank had called her; and though something that I did not well understand guarded my heart against her witchery, I sat by amused, and watched how she removed one shade of reserve after another from my brother's mind, and taught it to shine out, with all its powers heightened and refined by new feelings, which neither he nor I dreamed could so soon take possession of his heart.

She, I doubt not, with woman's intuitive perception, at once saw and knew the deep and powerful passions which that heart concealed; and felt her own capability to rouse them into action. I believe, too, that she proposed at first but to trifle with him as she had trifled with many before; and to win for her vanity, the most grateful of all flattery to woman, the excited love of a strong and vigorous mind. But women often deceive themselves in regard to their own strength, while they calculate on the weakness of others; and striving alone to make a slave, often give themselves a master. Lady Eleanor Fleming had met with many men in the world handsomer, gayer, brighter, than Frank Masterton; had brought them to her feet, and laughed their passions to scorn; or coldly pretended she had not seen their growing love. But she had never met one altogether like my brother. There was a depth, a strength, a sternness in his nature, that could not be moved without effect, that must act powerfully whenever it did act; and, though she put forth all her charms, and habitually entered upon the game she had taught herself to play, she seemed to feel before long, that she had staked upon its issue what she had never for a moment risked before—her own heart.

After we had sat for a short time, wearing away the moments in conversation, of a kind that imperceptibly threw down all the barriers of formal reserve which the shortness of our acquaintance had left, she rose, and giving Frank her hand, "You must eat with me, and drink with me, Colonel Masterton," she said, "and then I will suffer you to wear off the weariness of your long march in repose. Your chambers are prepared, and—nay, I will take no refusal," she added, seeing my brother about to decline her proffered hospitality. "Did you think you could enter my house without becoming a prisoner?"

"A captive, I am afraid," replied my brother, in an under-

tone. But she proceeded without noticing the little gallantry of the speech.

"No, no, sir! Here are your head-quarters. There is plenty of room in this house for all your immediate followers; and till you go, you are my guest. When the day comes that calls you to the field, I will see you depart, and speed you with my prayers; and should chance bring you back, crowned with victory, to the dwelling of poor Ellen Fleming, I will weep my joy for—for—for the triumph of loyalty and honour. And now to supper, gentlemen;" and, as she spoke, she led the way into an adjoining chamber, where a table was laid with viands, which I neither particularly noticed at the time, nor shall attempt to recapitulate here. The wines, indeed, were not to be forgotten; for all the most exquisite vintages of the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Garonne, were there; and in a state of perfection which I had never before, and perhaps never since, have tasted.

Frank drank deep. He was usually moderate to a fault; but now he seemed to seek by every means to raise his spirit from its sleep. He drank deep; but not too deeply. Reason reeled not on her throne; no perception was clouded, no faculty obscured; but, on the contrary, the dull reserve which shadowed him was cast away at once; and his mind shone forth in all its native splendour. The fair syren at whose side he sat put forth all her powers; but whether in light wit, or deep feeling, or refined thought, or elegance of language, she found herself outdone by the young soldier she strove to conquer; and at last, driven for recourse to simple beauty, as her only means of triumph, she sat and smiled, supreme at least in that, not unwilling to yield the palm in all the rest to one whom she viewed with pleasure, still mingled with surprise. Perhaps, too, the evident admiration with which she was herself regarded—the certainty that her presence, like the light of the sun waking into being the beauties of creation, called forth all the splendour she looked upon, made her pleased with a display of powers which were brought into action by herself.

Surprise was the predominant feeling in my own bosom at all that I saw and heard. I was aware, indeed, of the deep stores with which my brother had treasured a mind of immense capabilities; but I had never dreamed of seeing those capabilities so speedily turned to account, those treasures so easily brought forth, and so splendidly displayed. I had never, indeed, seen him fail in anything to which he bent his energies, but I had never fancied that those energies could be roused, even for a moment, by a woman's smile. For a time, I bore my

share in the conversation ; but as so great and sudden a change came over my brother, I became silent, and sat and listened, too, in no small wonder. Lady Eleanor permitted no pause. She sought not indeed any longer to shine. Either, skilfully contented with the advantage she had gained, she struck not one useless blow for a won victory ; or, giving herself really up to pleasure, she strove to enjoy to the utmost such conversation as she seldom met. She suffered not her part, however, to flag ; but with quick and easy brilliancy, supplied materials for a thousand brief bright sallies ; and running up and down the diapason of human wit and feeling, seemed to try every tone of my brother's heart and mind, like a skilful performer on some new fine instrument.

I believe Frank had almost forgotten that I existed ; and for more than an hour, he continued a conversation in which, though he shone more than any, the object of his shining was not at all himself, while it must have been still evident to Lady Eleanor, that the spirit of all this brightness emanated from her own eyes. At length, his look happened to fall upon me ; and whether that circumstance suddenly recalled our former days and his former character—whether he felt ashamed of a gaiety at which he had often sneered, or feared that his bosom was of glass, and that I should see the new passions that were working disowned within, I know not ; but he suddenly paused, resumed his chilly reserve, and taking leave of our fair hostess for the night, retired to the apartments prepared for us, to confer with the quarter-master, who had been sent for during our supper.

CHAPTER VI.

THE chambers assigned to us were large and lofty, and communicated with each other through two spacious tiring-rooms ; in one of which sat the quarter-master and a sergeant, ready to receive orders and to make their report. Nothing, however, had occurred to disturb our night's repose. No news had been received of either Goring or Skippon. William Fells had not returned ; and the reconnoitring parties which had been sent out to beat the country, had met with no enemy ; but, on the contrary, had heard reports that the whole force of the royalists had marched towards London. A thousand rumours were of course current through the country ; some declaring that a battle had been fought on Blackheath, the Parliamentarians defeated, and the King re-established in London ; others stating

that Fairfax had out-manœuvred Lord Norwich, got in the rear of his army, destroyed the bridges, and cut off his supplies. By one account, Hales had been seen proceeding with all speed towards France, to negotiate with Cardinal Mazarin; and by another, the fleet had entered the Thames, sailed up to London, and threatened to fire upon the city if the monarch were not released. It is not necessary here to inquire how many drops of truth were mingled with all this ocean of falsehoods; but from the very circumstance of nothing being clearly known, except that no troops had been seen for some days within ten miles of the village, we inferred that the enemy were farther from us than we had been at first led to imagine. The country also was stated to be generally loyal; and in many places in the immediate vicinity of Penford-bourne, the peasantry had been found arming in the king's favour.

With these quieting assurances we retired to bed. I, having lost my valet, was obliged to undress myself in silence, a thing wonderfully disagreeable, when one has accustomed oneself to wind up the day by one of those drowsy gossipings, which are the best passports to the land of sleep: but as an indemnification, I could hear, through the open doors of the tiring-rooms, godly Gabriel Jones holding forth to his master on the perfections of our fair hostess.

"She is, in truth, a goodly and a glorious creature; a cunning and miraculous piece of work; and were it not that her servants declare that she is as pure and undefiled in spirit, as she is beautiful in form, she is one of those whom it would befit young gentlemen to avoid, for fear of temptation. Verily, as I saw her but now, crossing the corridor to her bedchamber just opposite, with her two maids lighting her across—verily I was moved, and said to myself, Lo! the Queen of Sheba."

Frank listened in silence, as he usually did, distilling all he heard through the alembic of his own brain; which—however mingled and compounded might be the mass poured into it by the ear—generally contrived to separate the real spirit from that with which it was adulterated. How long Gabriel was suffered to discourse, and what were the inferences which my brother drew from his holdings-forth, I know not, for I soon paid tribute to the son of Erebus, and heard no more; nor were dreams wanting to my sleep with all their strange vagaries—dreams, which sometimes tell the secrets of his own heart to the sleeper, long before his waking eyes would dare to pry into that dark cabinet, which the thief-like visions of the night break open at a blow. I know not well what they were on this occasion, but a confused crowd of painful images passed across my mind, the most prominent of which was, that Lady Eleanor

Fleming had stabbed Emily Langleigh before my eyes; and that my brother held my arms while the assassination was committed. So strong was the impression, that I started up, and, before I was well awake, grasped my sword. But all was darkness round me; and after gazing about for several minutes upon the blank vacancy, endeavouring to call to mind where I was, I again lay down, and slept with less disturbed repose.

The sun was high before I awoke, and starting up, I hastened half dressed to my brother's chamber, unwilling that either he or I should seem to neglect our military duties in the soft comforts of our new quarters; but the apartment was vacant, both door and window were open; and as I turned to quit the room, Gabriel Jones entered, as if to aid in dressing his master. He seemed—for it was never possible to ascertain whether the look he put on was anything more than seeming—as much surprised as myself, to find that Frank, who was naturally not very matutinal in his habits, had risen before me.

"It is not yet the sixth hour," said he, "at which time he charged me to rouse him. But verily, his honour does well to watch, with his light burning," added the knave, in the tone of a dull bagpipe. "Does not the Apostle say——"

Without waiting for the text, I hastened back to my own chamber, completed my toilet, and, running down stairs as fast as possible, turned my steps towards the village. A complication of shrubberies and winding walks, with high screens of neatly trimmed laurel and holly, swept away to the right hand of the avenue; and, fancying that if I could make my way through, I should reach the regiment in half the time which the other road required, I entered the first gravelled path I found, and sped onward like light. I got into such a labyrinth, however, that I was soon obliged to turn back; and in a moment after, as I was seeking my way out, I heard my brother's voice speaking quick and eagerly. I was walking rapidly, when the sounds first struck my ear; but from an instinctive feeling that he would wish no listeners to his words but the person to whom they were addressed, I suddenly stopped and looked for some way to extricate myself from the shrubbery.

There appeared no side path, however; and before I had determined whether to go back or advance, I caught the sweet tones of Lady Eleanor; they were lower than those of my brother, but more distinct, and my pause had given the two time to come nearer, so that, before my utmost speed could carry me away, both her answer and a part of my brother's rejoinder had reached my ear. In my haste, what was said carried no distinct meaning to my mind. It was one of those impressions, the memory of which gradually becomes stronger than the thing

itself; and though at first I scarcely marked the import of what passed, I remembered, the moment after, the very words which had been used.

"What indeed would not woman sacrifice for a man she loved?" said Lady Eleanor—"but I speak on hearsay," she had added, in a gayer voice, "for I never yet felt what love is."

"Nor I," replied my brother. "Nor I till——"

I turned away, as I have said, as fast as possible, and, as they walked slowly, I was soon out of earshot. For some way I went on with the speed of light, but the sounds which I had heard kept returning upon my memory; I could not doubt the meaning of what had been said, and the tumult of thoughts and feelings which filled my bosom and my brain, soon moderated my pace. "What, what was it," I asked myself, "that Frank can dream of in his present conduct? Is he mad? Is he delirious? or is he worse?" But I little knew as yet the effect that love could have upon a mind like his, nor believed that a heart that had hitherto seemed incapable of feeling it, could yield itself blindly up at once to the wildest impulses of a passion which he had affected to condemn a thousand and a thousand times.

I paused and pondered long, not feeling myself called upon in his absence to make great speed towards the general quarters. My walk, however, ended in the village, and I proceeded to make such arrangements as seemed necessary. Nearly an hour elapsed before Frank appeared. He was pale and thoughtful, somewhat absent and careless in his commands, but at the same time peremptory in his tone, and more reserved than ever.

The officers, who were generally either the sons of our greater farmers, or of the minor gentry in our neighbourhood, did not of course presume to take any notice of their commander's conduct; and I was naturally desirous of seeing everything proceed as usual, and did all in my power to relieve the evident agitation of mind under which my brother was suffering. At first he seemed somewhat embarrassed by my presence, and once spoke to me in a harsh and imperious tone, which I might have foolishly resented under any other circumstances; but feeling for him more than he knew, I refrained from all opposition, remedied some contradictory orders he had given; and, when all the military business of the morning was over, went back with him towards the house, to wait the coming of our messenger from Lord Goring, whose return we expected would take place about mid-day.

Frank walked slowly on for some way, leaning on my arm in silence, and bending his eyes upon the ground. He was not so

much absent as embarrassed; and his mood seemed one of those varying, uncertain tempers of mind, in which a man, unable to approve and unwilling to condemn himself, would willingly seek for sympathy were he not afraid of meeting censure, and would gladly find any one to encourage that for which he has himself found no excuse; yet, at the same time, is quite ready to quarrel with any person, rather than quarrel with his own conduct—a mood, in short, which, like some of the sultry days between spring and summer, may pass off in sunshine, in rain, or in thunder, at the will of a breath of wind. He looked up more than once, after we had entered the park; and there seemed a struggle in his bosom, whether he should speak or not. But that flowing confidence which is generally a quality of youth, was contrary to all his habits, and he remained silent for some time. At length, when we were perhaps within ten paces of the house, he paused and grasped my arm, saying, in a tone that went to my heart, “Harry, my dear brother, I am not so happy as I have been; and something tells me that you and I have left happiness behind us.”

I did not well know what to say, without betraying that I knew more than he communicated; and I am afraid that I answered him with a common-place—a thing for which he, of all men, felt the most disgust. “Nonsense, Frank,” I replied: “we shall have orders to march before this day’s noon; and before to-morrow’s, you will have forgotten all these sad thoughts.”

He looked at me sternly for a moment, and then turning away, as if I could not comprehend anything he felt, he abruptly entered the house without speaking.

Before I had time to add anything either, to what I had said, we were both in the dining-hall, and no longer alone.

If he had not met from me the kind of sympathy he desired, he received from the mistress of the mansion a sort of silent consolation, which was but too irresistible. What had passed between them, while out, I know no farther than I have stated; but it seemed as if the lady felt that there was something to be compensated. Perhaps she had given him pain—perhaps had done so intentionally; for it is sometimes both sweet and politic to lay up something to atone, when atonement is easy. At the same time, as if by a mutual understanding, no notice was taken of their former meeting that day. It remained, as far as they knew, a secret confined to their own bosoms; no very safe link of connexion between two such beings as they were. At all events, she received him to her breakfast-table with a glad, yet diffident glance; and while she welcomed me gaily and lightly, she spoke to him with that soft and tender manner, which few hearst

are well enough fortified to resist. Wit and brilliancy towards him were all laid aside ; and the sole fascination she used was gentleness. But it did fascinate, and the more, because those who saw it, felt that no other charm was wanting, though all but it were unemployed. There was a languid paleness, too, over her countenance, which spoke of feelings disturbed, and which that alchemist, Vanity, might turn both to matter for hope and interest, while an occasional quick flush, which rose on her beautiful cheek when her eyes suddenly met his—and which could not be feigned—gave the value of truth to more than what her words, and all that her manner, implied.

The silence and reserve which had come over my brother once more, soon wore away under the influence of those eyes and that voice ; and I felt that, were I not present, much would be said that many an afterthought could never cancel. But, though the situation was not a pleasant one ; and, though I would have given worlds to have been where they wished me—far away—for I trust their wishes sent me no farther—yet I resolutely held my place ; for I sincerely believed that Frank had lost his better judgment for the time, and I hoped that my presence would keep him from farther rashness. How far I was justified in that conclusion, and how far the irksome company of a third person may not, like weight upon an arch, make strong love the stronger, I do not know ; but at all events, I did my best, at the expense of feeling that I made myself exquisitely disagreeable, to keep my brother from plunging into engagements which, in his situation, were madness indeed. Before noon, I trusted also that commands to march immediately would reach us from Lord Goring ; and I hoped that time and absence, and exciting scenes, would eradicate from my brother's mind a passion, which I deemed, from its brief existence, could not be very deeply rooted.

God knows, I felt not to the full how disinterested were my hopes, for I went not on to calculate all the consequences which must follow either course my brother pursued. I only saw that he was nourishing a passion that would meet my father's strongest opposition, and which, if persisted in, would bring misery and disunion into the bosom of his family. The possibility of my brother continuing to resist my father's expressed will, I never dreamed of ; nor do I think did he ; but I saw that, any way, Frank was laying up a store of uncomfot for himself ; and I did not pause to consider what benefit his conduct might produce to me.

I sat, therefore, and joined in the conversation, affecting not to perceive that aught but common courtesy influenced my two companions. There was a consciousness, however, in their

own bosoms, which caused them, perhaps, to suspect me of seeing more deeply than the surface; but the suspicion was evidently but transitory. Lady Eleanor often turned her eyes upon me, with a scrutinizing glance, but I took care to betray no knowledge; and the conversation, principally carried on by her and Frank, like a clear, sunny stream passing over the pebbles of its bed, touched lightly upon a thousand topics, mellowed them in its own transparent depth, and lighted them with the bright rays which poured through the current of the discourse, from the fire in their own hearts.

Noon approached and passed; and some grand massive clouds, heavy and detached in the broad expanse of blue, floated over the sun, and gave a coolness to the air. Frank, tired of my presence, and impatient under the excitement of his new sensations, proposed to call our troopers to saddle, and manœuvre the regiment on the village green. "In hopes," he said, "fair lady, that we may have an inspector-general, whose soft eyes will see but few faults in our poor efforts."

"If there be any faults," replied Lady Eleanor, "I will try hard to see them, I confess—for I feel afraid," she added, in a lower tone, "of being but too blind."

"In sweet charity, be blind still, dear lady," replied my brother, in the same voice. "I fear, in this world, opening one's eyes is always a day too soon, especially to faults," he added aloud, "and therefore I beg that you will keep your eyes fixed upon my brother Harry's troop, which he has brought into more perfect discipline than any of the rest—nay, to say sooth, his fellows go through their manœuvres with a precision only to be equalled by the learned cats at a fair. This is one of our troops of *harquebusiers*, and, good faith! to see the worthies prime their pieces, handle their matches, give fire, and file off to let the second, third, fourth, or fifth rank do the same, one would think them the priests of some papistical church, they set to their work so reverently."

A slight flush came over the cheek of our fair hostess, but it passed away in a moment.

"Do not abuse my troop, Frank," replied I; "it is the one will do best service in the field, depend upon it."

"Nay, I do not abuse it," he answered, with that spice of bitterness which he could seldom repress. "I say they are most uncommonly exact; and when they get their carbines to their shoulders, they put me ever in mind of fiddlers in an orchestra—nay, turn not red, Harry—I mean that they keep their time as well. But hie thee to the regiment, my good brother and adjutant; turn them out on the green, and, as soon

as this fair lady is prepared, I will escort her down to witness our evolutions."

Such a command could not be disobeyed, though its motive was evident enough. Lady Eleanor even requested Colonel Masterton by no means to stay for her, when his presence might be wanted elsewhere—but her tone did not much enforce her words. Strange, indeed, it is that such things should be ! yet—while we all think we are speaking one tongue—there are a hundred different languages brought in, to modify our mother English, even in the simplest conversations. There is the language, so often talked of, of the eyes ; and there is the language, too, of the tone, and the language of the gesture, and the language of the manner, and the language of the emphasis. In short, every one in this world speaks Babel, pure Babel ; and very, very often, the whole force of a thousand other tongues is employed to contradict the faint, false words that are dropping conventionally from our lips.

Lady Eleanor begged my brother on no account to remain for the purpose of escorting her ; but the tone, the manner, the eyes, said *stay* ; and Frank had suddenly become possessed of a fund of courtly politeness, which would on no account suffer him to leave her side.

Our horses had for some time been standing saddled at the door ; and mounting with all speed, the commands I had received were soon obeyed, the troopers in their saddles, and the regiment drawn up.

We had still to wait long for the appearance of the lady, whose preparations struck me as somewhat tedious. After a time, however, she appeared, riding a beautiful pawing jennet, accompanied by my brother on horseback, and followed by more than one servant mounted and dismounted. Frank was all life and spirit, and very different was his manner of command that day, from that to which the regiment was accustomed. His animation had of course its effect upon the men, and all our evolutions were performed with an ease and brilliancy I had never before witnessed. Lady Eleanor's jennet, well trained, though spirited, stood quietly through all the noise and bustle of our brief review. At length, after speaking a few words to her for the purpose of ascertaining whether it would also stand fire, Frank gave the word for the two troops of harquebusiers, which in those days formed a part of every regiment of cuirassiers, to blow their matches, and each line to give a parting salvo, ere they filed off. The order was promptly obeyed ; but, at the discharge of the very first troop, Lady Eleanor's jennet took fright, and galloped like the wind over the green

towards the park. The rider kept her seat with admirable horsemanship as long as the animal remained upon the level ground ; but, wild with fear, and knowing its own pasture, the jennet attempted to leap the low brick wall that separated the grounds from the village, caught the coping with its heels, and fell, throwing the lady to all appearance lifeless on the turf. In an instant—before I had time clearly to see what had passed—Frank's horse had cleared the wall at a little distance, and he was by her side. The regiment, the whole world, I believe, were forgot ; and raising her in his arms, he bore her across the park towards the house, followed by a crowd of servants and of the inferior neighbours, who on the commencement of the review had collected within the park wall to see the sight.

The command in chief, of course, fell upon me in my brother's absence ; and assuming a degree of his own sternness, to repress some merriment which his eagerness to succour the lady had occasioned, I went through the customary forms, and once more dismissed the troopers to their quarters. When all was concluded, I too hastened up to the house, in truth really anxious for the safety of the lovely woman, who, though undoubtedly the willing cause of my brother's infatuation, was, I believed, unconscious of the evil likely to result from the passion whose seeds she was busily planting in his bosom. I was admitted by the servants to the withdrawing-room, to which she had been conveyed, and found her lying on the pile of cushions, beside which we had first beheld her. A maid and my brother were all who were present ; but the lady was by this time perfectly recovered ; and was answering Frank's repeated inquiries by assurances that she was unhurt, and by a thousand thanks for the assistance he had afforded, and the kindness he had shown. The assistance, indeed, she would insist upon believing to be far greater than Frank would allow—indeed, far greater than that which really had been rendered. The horse, she declared, would certainly have trodden upon her as she lay, had not Colonel Masterton come to her assistance ; and though my brother pledged his word that the poor jennet, whose fright had caused all the alarm, had gone half over the park before he could possibly arrive, she clung to the idea of his having rescued her from danger, and magnified the debt to justify the greater gratitude.

Although she had escaped, very nearly without farther injury than such as mere fear might be supposed to occasion, Lady Eleanor continued to recline during the rest of the day ; and, with her beautiful limbs stretched upon her Moorish couch, with every accessory of beauty and luxury, a languid softness in her eyes, and an air of negligent exhaustion over her whole form,

she looked like a fairer type of that famed Egyptian queen, who made the mighty of the earth her slaves.

Thus hour passed after hour ; and Frank remained chained to her feet—chained, ay ! no negro slave with golden collar graven with his master's name,* ever bore the badge of servitude more plainly. No actual summons, it is true, called him from her. We had established a line of sentries up the avenue ; and reports were made from the regiment every hour. Our horses stood ready at the gate, and all things were prepared to march at a moment's notice, on the return of our messenger. But the very uncertainty of how long the happiness he enjoyed might last, made it but the more intoxicating, the more dangerous to my brother ; and the hourly expectation of a summons to quit charms which had so captivated him, and to abandon feelings that he had never known before, perhaps made those feelings shoot their roots more deeply and rapidly into his heart than they would have done under any other circumstances.

However that might be—whatever might be the cause of the suddenness of the change which had come over his whole character, and had transformed him from the most reserved, and calm, and cold of God's creatures, to the most ardent, quick, and impassioned—so it was ; and I verily do believe, he would even then have taken a distaff and have spun, had those lovely lips demanded it.

Nor was the lady herself less touched with the same fire. There was certainly more of manner in her conduct—she had more command over herself—a power which, while it shaded in her, with a veil of female delicacy, the same flame which blazed forth in his every word and look, gave an air of art and study to her demeanour, which at that time almost led me to believe that she was playing a part. But a thousand touches of deep feeling escaped her, even then, which after-knowledge of the world has taught me to judge more rightly ; and thence to feel sure, that, even at the period of which I speak, she loved deeply, and for the first time. Hers was the passion of one who had long trifled with love, without ever feeling it ; but who at last was profoundly wounded by the weapon she had used against others ; while Frank's was the first, deep, powerful, maddening affection of one who, long immovable, was hurled headlong from his strength at last.

The hours passed on, and no tidings arrived of our messenger. I could not suppose that any evil chance had befallen

* Such was not an uncommon sight in those days ; and even on the march of William III., to dethrone his father-in-law, something of the same kind was exhibited on a scale which we may well call "in gross."

him ; for he was one of those happy people that invariably find some way to get out of a scrape. Being also dressed with puritanic simplicity, totally unknown in the country, and guarded by as much shrewd cunning as ever fell to the share of mortal, he had every chance of reaching Lord Norwich's head-quarters unopposed : but still he did not return ; and I was uneasy at his absence. There was that sort of vague uncertainty about our situation—that consciousness of a thousand dangers surrounding us, together with that ignorance of the shape they might assume, or the side on which they might attack us—which to my feelings was worse than almost any more positive and ascertained peril. With my mind unoccupied, my passions disengaged, I could not rest satisfied with such a state of things ; and seeing that Frank was growing totally careless on the subject, and only regarded each hour's report as interruption to sweeter discourse,—hopeless also of rousing him from his apathy,—I proposed to go forth to reconnoitre the country myself.

Frank consented with the best grace in the world ; and Lady Eleanor, though she murmured something concerning my indefatigable zeal, did not oppose my going with any of those words that command.

I mounted, therefore, and sallied forth, followed by a sergent's guard ; but though for more than three hours I examined the country between the village and Maidstone ; inquired of every peasant, and climbed every eminence ; strained my eyes in examining the wide country round, and exhausted all my wit in catechising many an ignorant, obstinate, thick-headed boor ; I could obtain no information, either of Goring or Skippon, and returned convinced that both were much farther from us than we had first been taught to believe.

As we came nearer to our quarters, the old castle on the hill caught my eye ; and it immediately struck me, that from its commanding situation I should gain a better view of the country, if I could but climb to some of the still standing pinnacles, than could be obtained from any of the neighbouring points. The hill, upon which it was placed, was very steep and rocky, but clothed with wood, from the little stream (or bourne, as they called it) at its base, to the green platform on which the old fortress stood. The space between indeed was varied by many a bold face of clifty sandstone and many a detached bank unclothed by herb or flower ; but round the whole, as I have said, swept the remains of some old forest, which probably at one time had covered all the neighbouring country. Through this wood appeared one or two paths, winding amongst the bold

masses of rock that broke the rounded green tops of the oak and the beech, and apparently terminating at the esplanade above; and by one of these paths I determined to make my way up to the castle.

Leaving my horse, therefore, below with the troopers, who sheltered themselves under the shade of the wood side, I began to climb the hill. It was by this time verging towards the evening, but with the sun still high and powerful, so that the ascent was somewhat fatiguing, and I paused more than once to recover breath. One of my halts, however, was disturbed by several stones rolling down upon my head, as if some one were walking along the steep and narrow path above; and, looking up, I strove to discover who or what it was that preceded me, but I saw no one; and as it might very well be a sheep, a goat, a deer, or even a bird, I proceeded without farther notice.

Before I had reached the top I perceived that the path which I was following wound away by an easy slope to the farther side of the hill. At the same time, directly before me—with its grey stones overhanging a mass of rocky cliff not a hundred yards from me, but with a somewhat precipitous ascent between—I saw through the trees the angle of the highest tower—which had still resisted even Time, that great commander, who destroys, by his unrelenting siege, more castles than the sap and mine. The sally-port, for ages so carefully barred and watched, now stood wide open, for the entrance of whatever being chance might bring to invade the territories no longer guarded by anything but solitude and desolation.

The beaten path, as I have before said, took another turn to reach some other part of the building; but, making for myself a way over the roots of the trees, and the high bank which intervened, I soon arrived at the threshold of the postern, which man's foot seemed to have left untrodden for long years; and, climbing the grassy and ruined staircase, which wound through the thick wall, I reached the battlement above. Thence I cast my eyes over the whole country which lay beneath my feet, spread out in sunshiny magnificence. The many roads which intersect that rich part of England, wandered away from my feet in a thousand directions, like the minute traces which the lizards leave behind upon the fine sand; and I could perceive here and there, a group of country people plodding quietly homeward; but nothing to cause alarm or to excite suspicion. The evening was not far advanced, but, nevertheless, the great orb of day had so far declined as to group the trees and woods in broad masses of light and shade, while the grand floating clouds, which would fain have been thunder-storms, cast immense blue sha-

dows over detached portions of the landscape, contrasting splendidly with the laughing daylight, in which the whole of the surrounding scene rejoiced.

My object certainly was more to examine than to admire; but after having gazed in vain, as far as discovery went, I stayed some time to let my eye rest upon a scene, the calm, rich, peaceful extent of which fell upon my heart with a sensation of stillness so deep as almost to be melancholy.

CHAPTER VII.

As I descended the stairs, with a slow and somewhat thoughtful step, I heard a rustling below, as of some persons moving through the long grass and brambles, which now tenanted the court-yard; and, luckily before I had shown myself, the sound of people speaking reached me, and I paused. My progress, so far, had not given the alarm to the speakers. They continued their conversation; and the ruined walls of the tower in which I stood, collected every word that was spoken in the court below.

"Now, then," said one voice, "on with thy tale, man—though why thou shouldst fear to speak before Jonah, I know not."

"For fear he should not bury what he hears in a whale's belly," replied another.

"Pshaw! He is honester than thou art," rejoined the first.

"The more reason he should not hear my counsel," said the second. "But let us get up to the top of that tower, and see whether the Amalekitish horsemen have turned."

"Nonsense!" replied the other; "they have gone back to their quarters. Besides, Jonah would give us notice if they were coming here. So on with thy tale, for I am in haste. He has bit at the bait, thou sayest, like a famished trout at a water-fly. What more?"

The first sound of the voices had made me pause; and as they went on, there were many reasons induced me to await patiently the termination of the conversation which the speakers had begun. It was evident, from what they said, that besides the two men below, there was another watching at no great distance, and from the clink of spurs, as well as from various other jingling sounds, it appeared clear that the speakers were

well armed. In the first place, then, I did not choose, out of reach of assistance, to encounter unnecessarily two men, whose words at once showed them to be enemies to my party, with a third within call. In the next place, I believed them to be enemies who assumed the character of friends; and in any circumstances, whether as open or concealed foes, I felt myself perfectly justified in making myself master of their plans, in whatever way chance might furnish. I paused, therefore, and listened with all my ears; and never doubting that if they discovered me, immediate and deadly strife must be the consequence, I drew myself back into the dark turn of the stair, just above a spot where one side of the wall was broken away, determined, over the gap thus left in the masonry, to hurl the first who attempted to come up, should their proposal of climbing the tower be renewed.

"Well, then," continued one of the voices, which I felt positively certain was that of my brother's valet, Gabriel Jones, "I told thee that he bit at the bait like a famished trout; but I did not tell thee that the bait seemed marvellous willing to be swallowed."

"I knew that, without thy telling," replied the other voice, of whose sounds I did not feel near so sure, though I thought I had heard them also before. He spoke in a sharp rough tone, I remarked; and it seemed to me, that though nothing was said which could give offence, there was something in the general subject of the conversation, which pained and irritated the person who now spoke, in a degree which scarcely brooked control. "I know that, without thy telling. Think'st thou I have known her from her childhood, and watched every turn of her mind till I could divine at a glance why her ribands were of a particular colour, or why her kerchief was turned aside; and did not know that she could not sit beside any male thing for ten minutes, without striving to make it her slave? Ay! and with such power does she strive, that I never yet saw the man that could resist it."

"And thou thinkest that she is never touched herself by this same vanity of love?" demanded his companion.

"As the diamond that cuts glass is wounded by the glass that it cuts," replied the other, "so has she been ever."

"But so is she not now," replied the voice I took to be that of Jones, with the most determined accent: "for I tell you, Master Avery, that she is now as much in love with him as woman ever was with man. I have lived my day, and not for nothing, having known many women in a godly way; and I say, she is more in love with him even than he with her. Ay, and as I

know you have set her apart as your share of the spoil, and have heard say that you are as sinfully possessed with her fleshly beauties as the rest, and propose to wed her ——”

“I wed her!” cried the other, in a tone of bitter negation—
“I wed her!—I would as soon wed a viper that has stung me. I tell thee, man, she has done me wrong; and I will have my revenge. But wed her!—no, no, no, no, no! I will wed her rich lands and manors; but the marriage contract shall be a commission from the council of state, and she shall be named therein a sequestered malignant, giving harbour and countenance to vain and malicious persons, rebellious to the state and houses of parliament. Wed her! But she can wed no one without an act passes for allowing to all women the consolation of two husbands. But, pshaw! thou talkest nonsense; she loves him not. She plays with him as she has played with many a thousand others: she feels it not, whatever she makes him think.”

“I see the tidings give thee pain to hear,” replied his companion; “and I have heard that thou did once love her thyself.”

“I did! I did!” answered the person he called Avery, in a tone, and with a vehemence which showed how much passion overmastered reason; “I did love her — madly — passionately. But I tell thee now, there is not in my bosom a particle of love as small as the grain of dust which escapes the careful housewife’s eye. No; there is no love, but some hate; and I would give two fingers of my right hand—ay! of this right hand which serves me well when occasion calls for it—to think that she herself were wounded as thou sayest. Oh, to see her writhe under the passion she had so often mocked! to see her burn with the same mad love! to see her hopelessness! or even more,” he added, in a low, deep voice, “to see her infamy!”

“There is a hopeful chance of it all,” answered the other, with a sort of common-place tone of knavery, that discorded strangely with the deep and terrible passions which the voice of his companion had betrayed. “There is a hopeful chance of it all, if things be managed rightly.”

“Pshaw!” cried the other; “I tell thee she does not—she cannot love—it is not a part of her nature: she knows not what it is.”

“Mark me then, good master Avery,” replied the first. “Why sits she even now with her hand clasped in his? Why did she lean her head upon his shoulder and weep like an infant within this hour, while telling him something that my ears could not catch, through the chink of the door?”

The other paused for some moments before he replied, as if the tidings that he heard took him by surprise; and I could

hear him make two or three strides through the court-yard with a heavy foot.

"Ha!" cried he, as he did so; "ha! then she is caught indeed! Little did I think," he added, pausing—"little did I think when I took care to let her hear of his coming, and to spread the tidings of his beauty and gallantry, in order that she might invite him to her house, and entangle him in those bonds of amorous coquetry, which I well knew she would weave—little did I think she would outdo my desires, twine the spider threads she has spread for so many round herself as well as him, and be caught in her own net, as well as fulfil my purpose of detaining him at her feet. But mark me! mark me well, Matthew Hutchinson ——"

Matthew Hutchinson! I thought; then, after all, it is not Gabriel Jones! Yet I could have sworn to the voice; and as these thoughts passed through my brain, curiosity got the better of prudence, and taking a step forward, I leaned over the side of the broken wall, to gain a view of the speakers. I did not succeed, however; and, in the effort, I displaced one of the large stones, which—together with a mass of loose cement, and some shrubs that had struck their roots therein—rolled away, and fell close to where the others must have stood. Possibly they might catch a glimpse of my hand also, as I grasped the corner of the tower; for the moment after came the words, "We are overheard!" followed by a loud, long whistle; and I could hear retreating steps, making their way through the brush-wood.

Instantly springing from my concealment, and resolved to run all risks for the purpose of discovering who were the speakers, I attempted to follow; but the court was perfectly clear by the time I reached it. I darted from one part of the building to the other with the speed of light, but in vain. I rushed out upon the esplanade, but there was no one there. Not a step could I hear; not a human being could I discover; not a motion could I see amongst the shrubs, except when I startled a thrush from the leaves, and had to blush for half-drawing my sword upon a bird. All was clear, and calm, and still, with the evening sunshine sleeping quietly upon the grey ruin and the green ivy, as if the step of man had never disturbed the silence of the place since the ruin and the ivy had first clung together—quiet, as if no human voice had broken the hush, since those courts and halls had been trod by the busy and the gay of other days. I could hardly believe my senses; and again ran rapidly over every part of the building, which indeed seemed to offer small opportunity of concealment. But the second examination was as unsuccessful as the first; and now,

resolving to ascertain in some degree whether Gabriel Jones was really the speaker whose voice I had heard, by seeking him at the manor-house, I ran down the hill like lightning, and springing on my horse, ordered one half of the troopers to spread themselves round the edge of the wood on every side, and keep vigilant watch till they were relieved, stopping every person who came down from the hill above.

In the meanwhile, accompanied by the other half, I put my horse into a gallop, and never drew a rein till I arrived at the steps of the mansion. I entered without ceremony, and encountering one of Lady Eleanor's tiring-women in the second hall, I asked if she had lately seen Colonel Masterton's valet. She replied at once that she had passed him not long before, as he sat reading on the window-seat in the lobby. It was his usual place of saintly meditation, one of those broad window-seats, retiring thither from the unholy merriment of his fellow-servants in the hall. To the spot the woman mentioned, then, I hastened; and undoubtedly there sat Gabriel Jones, with a Bible in his hand, and bearing not the slightest mark of having quitted the house during the day. I fixed my eye keenly upon him; he met it without a change of aspect. I spoke to him; he replied in a calm, unruffled tone.

What then, could be the meaning of what I had heard? I knew that I had no talent for remembering either voices or persons; and therefore I doubted myself. Yet the tone and manner had been so like that of the canting varlet who followed my brother, that I had not for a moment doubted the identity of him and the person I had heard speak, till I found the latter was called Matthew Hutchinson.

I have reported the conversation of the speakers strictly as I heard it; but it may be now necessary to say a word or two in regard to the interpretation I put upon it. Without some latent link of connexion between myself and the persons who spoke, their words would have been uninteresting enough, but I had fancied myself absolutely sure that there was such a link, and while that certainty lasted, what they had said appeared of no slight import. Under the first impression, I had believed that the whole conversation referred to my brother and Lady Eleanor Fleming. It was applicable in almost every respect, as long as Gabriel was the undoubted speaker; but now it might refer as well to some other persons I had never seen; and entering my own chamber, I stood musing for a moment, in a state of doubt and uncertainty impossible to be expressed. In thinking over the conversation I had overheard, however, I began to remember several circumstances that were apparently at variance with my first idea, that the lady spoken of was Lady

Eleanor Fleming. No names, it must be remembered, had been mentioned but those used by the two strangers to each other. One of the speakers had clearly inferred, that the woman of whom he spoke was bound by indissoluble ties to some one else. Now Lady Eleanor was a widow, the mistress of her own person and fortune, at least, so I had been taught to believe; and though I felt sure that her union with my brother would cause eternal discord between my father and Frank, yet in every other respect she was qualified to become his wife. But such did not seem to be at all the situation of the person I had heard mentioned; and combined with the fact of my finding Gabriel Jones sitting quietly at the manor, this circumstance led me to believe that I had grossly deceived myself: nor could I help acknowledging that I must have done so, even while the sound of the hypocritical villain's voice kept ringing in my ears, and still assuring me that I was right.

The whole business, in short, confused and perplexed me; and at length, after sending to recal the troopers from the hill, and having somewhat rectified the disarray of apparel which my expedition had occasioned, I entered the withdrawing-room, in which my brother still sat by Lady Eleanor. I doubt whether he had ever moved, except to reach the book which he held in his hand, and from which he had been reading to her some selected passages from Boccaccio. None of the extracts which that book contained, indeed, could offend the most modest ear; but through the whole there was a strain of soft voluptuous sweetness, somewhat difficult for a young man to read safely to a lovely woman. Every one, I believe, must have felt that there are some things, which without having aught of positive evil in them, are dangerous from their very sweetness. Some pieces of music, for instance—some pieces of poetry that unnerve the heart and weaken the moral energies of the mind. They are like certain perfumes which, though sweet and balmy beyond all words, relax and overpower all the corporeal faculties. Such was the book, out of which Frank was reading. All that was evil had been carefully left out, but there was softness enough remaining to afford passion a bed of flowers.

Lady Eleanor lifted her head, and my brother ceased reading, as I entered; but there seemed to be a new change come over them. All was calm. There was every now and then a glance of deep affection passed between them, which I, who had beheld all that went before, marked and understood. I saw that their mutual hearts had poured themselves forth to each other, and that all had been spoken. But it is probable, that had any other persons come there suddenly, without previous knowledge, they would have seen nothing in the conduct of those two to

excite a suspicion of what was passing in their bosoms. There was, it is true, in my brother's aspect, a degree of anxiety mingled with melancholy; but that might have been accounted for from a thousand other sources; and, though his eye often wandered over vacancy, as if it communed with things we could not see, and his words occasionally fell somewhat wide of the subject, yet the state of the country, and the responsibility of his command, might easily explain such absence of mind. It was only to my ear a certain softening of the tone when he spoke to her; only to my sight a peculiar glitter of the eye when it rested on her lovely form, that told what was the theme of his thoughts, when his mind seemed wandering afar.

As a matter of course, when first I returned, he asked some questions concerning my expedition; and I, in reply, simply stated the fact, that I had made a considerable circuit through the adjacent country, and that I had gained no information of the enemy. I gave no particulars, and he sought none; and all the news that he could furnish forth amounted to the statement that William Fells had not yet returned, accompanied by some expressions of wonder at his absence. Little anger, however, or impatience, mingled with his surprise; he was evidently growing quite contented with his present situation; his mind, concentrating all its energies upon one object, saw and was willing to see no other; and I doubted not that he wished William Fells might remain wherever he was till doomsday, provided he himself might remain where he was also.

To me Lady Eleanor was all that was kind and attentive; and there was a degree of timid softness in her manner, as if she feared me, and yet would fain have won my regard, which interested me in despite of myself. I felt as if I had injured her, by believing that she was the person to whom the unseen speakers had referred; and I was again obliged to acknowledge to myself, that I had no just cause to suppose her the original of the very unfavourable portrait they had drawn. That she had acquired a sudden and extraordinary influence over my brother, was all that I could lay to her charge; but that she herself shared the passion she inspired, and brought along with her beauty, and talent, and fortune, and rank, at least in equal proportion to the endowments which Frank possessed, I could not doubt. If, therefore, the event of their love was unhappy, she was to be pitied more than blamed; and I reasoned myself into believing, that I had done her gross wrong in attributing to her a character, affixed by two persons I did not know, to some one whose name had never been mentioned. My manner and my tone, which I am not sure had been at first so polite as either her station or her hospitality required, gradually softened

into more kindly demeanour, under these reasonings. In addition to all the powers of pleasing she naturally possessed, she became an object of interest and of thought to me. I could not help looking upon her, I knew not well why, as one whose destiny was someway to be linked to me and mine; and at the same time, the vague conviction of a thousand dangers and obstacles, made me set down in my own mind her portion in our common lot, as one of unhappiness. I beheld her then, with the feelings wherewith we always regard any one doomed to suffer. But those sensations were still so undefined, as to take no part from the charms of her society; and enchanted (though not to the same degree as Frank) with her grace, her beauty, and her wit, I yielded myself to an evening of enjoyment.

The hours flew rapidly; and at supper, which was announced soon after my return, the conversation became of that varying kind—sometimes brilliantly gay, sometimes grave almost to sadness; sometimes interrupted totally by those breaks of deep thought that words cannot, must not embody—which is perhaps more powerful in working upon the heart's feelings, than the brightest of man's wit alone. Reserve and unkindness, and I am afraid duty too, were forgotten, and all was free kindness and ease. I was the first to put a check upon it, by observing, most ill-advisedly, more as a thought that found unconscious voice than a premeditated remark, "Who would have thought, Lady Eleanor, that at this present moment we have known each other but four-and-twenty hours?"

My own heart was free; and Heaven knows, I meant no offence; but even as I spoke the blood mounted up over her neck, and cheeks, and brow, and forehead, to the very roots of that deep brown hair, that fell in hyacinthine masses round her face.

My brother started, and for a moment turned upon me a half-angry glance, as if he thought I meant to break in upon the pleasure of the moment by an implied reproof; but the annoyance which I began myself to feel at my ill-judged remark, and which showed itself by this time in my face, evinced my innocence of all offence; and he answered, "What is the real difference, Harry, between four-and-twenty hours and a life, or even an eternity? Nothing, believe me! Time is but a name. It is what is done in time that is the substance. What are twenty-four centuries to the hard rock, more than twenty-four hours to man, or twenty-four minutes to the ephemera? Ay! even in our own existence, there are periods in which space, computed by its true measure of thoughts, feelings, and events, mocks the penury of man's artificial scale, and comprises a life-

time in a day. What matters it to me, how often the sun rises and sets? Since his last plunge into the depths of space, I have lived more years than ever I knew before."

Such a declaration I felt would bear no comment in his present state of mind, and I kept silence, praying heartily that our messenger might return before the next morning. Time wore on, however, and he did not come; and late at night we retired once more to our apartments. The doors of our dressing-rooms were open as before. On the previous night I suffered them to remain so, in consideration of the heat; but hearing Gabriel Jones once more begin his homily on the beauty of our hostess, with somewhat of unpleasant minuteness in his comments, I shut the door rather impatiently, feeling that I had no right to overhear my brother's conversation with his servant. What passed, therefore, I know not; but it went on long, now rising into a higher tone for a moment, now dropping into a low murmur. At length, I heard Frank exclaim, "Villain! is such thy morality? What meanest thou? What wouldst thou have me do? Speak out, sir! No innuendoes."

The reply was couched in so low a tone, that even the whisper of it scarcely reached me; but, the moment after, I distinctly heard a blow, followed by the words, "Scoundrel and slave!" spoken in the voice of my brother, excited to a pitch of vehemence I had never known before. "How dare you, for your miserable life, dream of so base a suspicion? Away! get thee gone! Away, I say!"

But the valet still lingered; and I could not but hear his low and droning voice, prolonging the conversation for some time after.

At length, the door of the other room was shut, and I endeavoured to recover that disposition to sleep, which those sounds had disturbed; but it was in vain. Before I could close my eyes, I heard Frank once more begin to move in his dressing-room, and for more than an hour he continued to pace up and down with a quick and heavy footfall, which evidently betokened the agitation of his mind. Sleep I could not, though I tried all the many ways recommended to the watchful: I counted endless numbers, I kept my eyes fixed wide open upon vacancy, I strove never to let my thoughts rest upon any one subject; but the moment forgetfulness was sinking down upon me—the moment the heavy lid was drooping wearily over my eye, my brother's sharp irregular step roused me with a start to think of all that he was suffering. At length, I could bear it no longer. Notwithstanding his coldness and reserve, I loved him deeply and truly. I felt for what I believed, what I knew, indeed, he experienced; and aware how much the strongest mind in such moments

requires consolation and support, I rose, and throwing on my morning-gown, I opened the door of the dressing-room.

He was still pacing up and down, habited in his night-gear, with his slippers on his feet, and his arms crossed upon his chest. The candles had been suffered to burn untrimmed, till they cast a dim and ghastly light over the room, and his own face, haggard with struggling passions, showed a strange wild expression in the pale semi-obscurity of the apartment. His ear instantly caught the sound of the opening door, and he turned quick upon me with an expression of impatience and surprise, which might at another time have daunted me. But strong in fraternal regard, and resolved not to importune him for his confidence, yet not to be repelled in offering him consolation and assistance, I advanced towards him, and took the hand he neither yielded nor withdrew.

"My dear Frank," I said, "I cannot see you so agitated, so different from what you usually are, without feeling for you, and offering you all that is in my power to offer. I am your younger brother, and perhaps not calculated to give you advice; but at all events I may yield you sympathy if not assistance. I do not ask your confidence; I see that you suffer; and I divine why you suffer. That is enough, and perhaps more than enough. Let us act as brothers; and at all events allow me to give you comfort if I can do no more."

He heard me to the end as usual—then seemed to struggle for a moment between habitual reserve and awakened kindness; and at length, throwing his arms round me, as he sometimes had done in our boyhood, he exclaimed—"My dear Harry, you are indeed worthy of more confidence than my evil spirit will suffer me to place in any one. That villanous, pandering, hypocritical fanatic!" he continued, bursting out with vehemence at some remembrance that seemed to come suddenly over his mind, "That villanous, pandering, hypocritical fanatic! The best service you could do me would be to shoot him through the head. He tempts me more than I believed Satan could have tempted."

"Nay!" said I, very well understanding who was the person he meant, though he had given him no name; "to shoot him through the head, though no more than a just reward, would hardly do; but it will be easy to send him back in irons to Masterton House. I as his officer will do that, and take the whole blame on myself."

"No, no, no!" answered Frank, with melancholy bitterness: "What, to blab of my weakness? to fill our stern father's ears with his son's mad, hopeless, desperate passion? to cant about beauty and comeliness and carnal perfections, and to show forth

how he would have stayed me from going down to drink of the pool, but lo ! I would not ? No, no, Harry ; I have missed the move, and the villain must make some mistake in his game before I can give him check. Sending him back would never do—'twould but be giving him a rod to smite me. No, Harry, no ! But what would you have me do, Harry ? Speak ! Not to get rid of him : but to get rid of myself ; to conquer the inner devil, which is the worst of the two."

"If you ask me seriously, Frank," I answered, "I would have you tarry in this house no longer than to-morrow morning. Wait but till ten o'clock. Between daybreak and that hour, there will be full time for William Fells to return, if Lord Goring be within twenty miles. If he arrive not, conclude that some mischance has happened, and march forward. Such is your duty as an officer, and your absence from this place will be the best thing that can befall you in every respect. You will then, at all events, learn whether you can conquer feelings, which, as far as I see, can but bring misery to all."

"But without any intelligence ?" said Frank. "Impossible, Harry ! Suppose William returns with orders and finds us gone ?"

"Leave a sergeant's guard to bring him on with all speed," replied I. "Let us march towards West Malling or Wrotham, near which the cavaliers must necessarily be making head, if, as we heard, they are retiring from Dartford."

"I will think of it," replied Frank ; "I will think of it. But yet it would seem a fertile way of having our march traced, and our progress opposed, to leave an insignificant party in this village, with a full knowledge of our route. Yet I will think of it. In some circumstances a choice of evils is all that is left. Fare-thee-well, Harry ; thank thee for thy kindness, and believe me, dear brother, that Frank is not always as cold as he looks. Even now you have been a comfort to me, and so I will hie me to my bed and sleep."

To have been so, was a comfort to me also ; and though I doubted his resolution, and would fain have had him yield his promise to follow my advice, I dared not urge him farther ; but retired to my own chamber, and pillowed on the sweet thought of having soothed my brother's agitated mind, I soon tasted as sweet a slumber as ever I remember to have enjoyed.

CHAPTER VIII.

I SLEPT soundly, and I slept long. It was seven o'clock before I woke, and I found that this morning, as well as that which preceded it, Frank was up and forth before me. Little doubting that his minutes of early diligence would be given to Lady Eleanor, I hastened down to the village; but to my surprise I met him there. He was in the act, however, of sending off a second messenger to Lord Norwich,* with orders to return the next day if at all. I ventured to remonstrate as soon as I could speak with him alone, pointing out, that in efforts such as that in which we were engaged, delay was always worse than rashness.

It is extraordinary what a change a few brief hours will sometimes work in human beings. Those whom we left the night before all gay familiarity, and frank, free-hearted kindness, will rise—strange moody puppets that we are!—will rise, after a few hours' sleep, as cold and distant as a stranger. I had quitted Frank, with our mutual hearts overflowing with fraternal affection, and the iciness of his nature so far thawed, that I thought nothing could ever freeze it towards me again. But now I met him in the morning as chill as ever: and as soon as I spoke, he cut me short, abruptly.

"My determination is taken, Harry," he replied.

"Then I hope, Frank," I said, with a foolish degree of heat at finding myself so unexpectedly repelled, "that it has been formed on motives connected with the service of the King."

"That, sir, is my affair," replied he, reddening; "I am here to command, I believe, and you to obey. At least, such, I think, is the import of the commissions we received at Masterton House."

I offered no reply; and the messenger was despatched. My brother then proceeded to make some quick and sharp inquiries about the regiment, with the brief activity of a man who, feeling that he has been—is—and will be—negligent of some important duty, strives to satisfy his conscience by a few minutes of hasty application. His energy, however, soon died away; and, at the end of half an hour, he mounted his horse, and rode back to the mansion, without taking any notice that such a being as his brother was upon the face of the earth. I paused for some moments, uncertain whether I would follow him thither

* George Lord Goring had before this time become Lord Norwich, and therefore the names are used indifferently; his claim to the title of Norwich never having been admitted by the parliament.

or remain at the village with the regiment. But, mastering my indignation, I at length set out, and arrived shortly after himself.

To particularize the events of that day were useless. My brother, feeling that he had not behaved to me with the same kindness I had displayed towards him, was of course more cold and reserved in manner than ever. Knowing himself to be wrong in a great and important point, he would fain have believed me wrong in the minor one of respect towards my commanding officer: for many a man escapes the unpleasant task of blaming himself, when he finds something to blame in those that show him his faults.

With Lady Eleanor, however, he was all joy and gladness; and by the despatch of the second messenger to Lord Goring, he seemed to think that he had won another day from fate. Finding myself *the one too much* to their happiness, and hopeless of effecting any benefit by staying, I proposed and received permission to enlist what men I could from the neighbouring villages. Thus I was absent during the greater part of the morning; and, with little difficulty, added nearly a hundred men to the numbers of the regiment. There never was such easy recruiting, for a military spirit, which had been encouraged in the country by both parties, had spread through all orders; and in every village I found a number of men, only requiring a leader. Many had served before, and had been disbanded; and all were strong and powerful fellows, zealous in the royal cause, and ready to shed their best blood for the King's deliverance. The whole country I found decidedly favourable to the monarch; and I could not help regretting that more active and better combined measures were not taken to give effect to the true wishes of the people; but so many reverses had befallen the cavaliers, that the chiefs in general were either timid from rebuffs, or rash from despair—were either hurrying on before their means were prepared, or delaying till they lost opportunity, that magic door by which man may reach everything on earth, if he seize the one brief moment that it is open before him. I could not but regret—but when I thought of the conduct of my own brother, I could not wonder at—the ill success of the royal cause; and thus indeed it was throughout that long and fatal struggle, which destroyed a good king and desolated a happy country. Each man who served, or pretended to serve the monarch, in fact and truth served his own passions, his own interests, and his own prejudices first; and then gave the dregs of his obedience to his master. Many loved the King, but the Parliament had taught even the cavaliers that he was not to be obeyed; and the lesson was not the less destructively followed,

because we affected to abhor it. During the evening, I gave my recruits what little drilling could be forced into the time; and endeavoured, as far as possible, to provide them with horses and arms; but, of course, many of them were but raw soldiers, and all of them were scantily accoutred.

My brother came not near the regiment during the whole day; and all the duties fell upon myself. These I performed as well as I could; and towards sunset rode back to the mansion-house, hoping that now, at all events, the last day of our abode in that Circean dwelling was closing in. I found both Frank and Lady Eleanor more absorbed in each other than ever. Her eyes when I entered were full of tears; but they were soon wiped away, and the evening passed as before. I never beheld her look so lovely. It seemed as if all her most potent charms had been reserved to shine out upon that last night of our stay. There was a continual variation of the colour in her cheek, that had in it something strange and striking; there was a degree of soul and feeling in every movement, in every tone, that gave a new grace to her splendid form, a new sweetness to her soft thrilling voice; and in her eyes there was a deep powerful light that seemed to spring from the very heart and told of the fire within.

At about eleven o'clock, we rose to retire to our apartments, and she bade us good night in a manner which seemed to speak that she felt we were going to sleep beneath her roof for the last time. I augured well from it for Frank's resolution the next day; and felt full of hopes that all might be amended which had gone amiss. My brother entered his own chamber; and both the doors between his apartments and mine were closed by his order. His rascally valet remained long with him; and I believe I was asleep before he went. My slumber was light, however; and in the middle of the night I woke up without any apparent cause, and could not close my eyes again. What it was had roused me I do not know. I had dreamed I heard a noise, but when I listened all was silence, and I addressed myself to sleep again. The attempt, however, was in vain, and rising from my bed, I approached the open window, through which I could see the beautiful stars shining in the purple air of a bright summer's night. It was all grand and still and solemn; and the eternal depth of space lying far and uninterrupted in its transparent darkness, seemed more tangible, yet more vast than in the day-time, when that profound interminable expanse swarming with stars, is veiled from our eyes by the woven canopy of sunbeams, that curtain round the world we dwell in. Having gazed on the sky till I was wearied with its immensity, my eye then fell upon the lawn, and in a moment after I saw a

figure emerge from the shadow of the trees, with the arms seemingly folded on the breast, and with a slow and musing step walk forward across the open ground, and enter one of the opposite walks. After thinking for some time, endeavouring to divine who it could be, I sat down by the window to mark whether it would return to the house or not.

The wind was westerly, and a minute or two after I thought I heard the distant sound of horses' feet. I listened and was confirmed in the belief. Through the still silence of all the world, I clearly distinguished the galloping of several horses, borne to my ear by the breeze, and alternately low and loud, as the riders passed by the various little woods, with which the country round was clothed. At length, the sound seemed lost, as the horses ran down into the valley on the other side of the hill which skirted the village to the west. A moment after, however, it rose again much louder; and then, upon the luminous verge of the sky, where the lingering rays of the last long midsummer day still tarried, as if to catch a glance of their successors, I could distinguish the figure of a single horseman. In an instant two more appeared, and then a fourth, as if in pursuit; and on they pushed at full speed for the village.

Towards the top of that hill was stationed our first picket; and before the heads of the three last horsemen had disappeared, as they descended the slope, there came a quick, sharp flash—another and other; and, a moment or two after, the report of distant fire-arms.

Hurrying on some clothes, I snatched up my sword and passed through the dressing-rooms to awaken my brother. I called: he did not answer. I approached his bed; it was vacant; but this—as it had been his custom sometimes, at Masterton House, to rise and walk forth on fine summer nights—did not surprise me, and the mystery of the figure I had seen upon the lawn was explained; though, at the same time, this watchfulness, night after night, showed me painfully the agitated state of his mind.

Without further search, I hastened down stairs, and out into the avenue. The sentry at the door had heard the report, but he had not seen the flash; and bidding him tell the Colonel what had occurred, I hurried on to the village for further information. The whole regiment was now mustering on the green, and in a very good state, for such young soldiers, to repel a night attack. By the light of candles, lanterns, and lighted matches, however, I beheld, in the midst of the whole, **my own** servant, William Fells, bleeding from a wound on his cheek, but, to all appearance, not seriously injured.

His story was soon told. He had not reached Lord Goring,

he said, notwithstanding all his efforts. On setting out, he had proceeded without stopping, till he was within six miles of Maidstone; and affecting to be terrified with a godly horror at falling into the hands of Goring's crew, he had gained from the people of the country full information concerning the Royalists, who had halted by this time in force, near Wrotham. Accordingly, having quitted the direct road to Maidstone, he turned towards the north; and as his horse was weary, determined not to hurry, although his slow pace might make him a borrower of the night. Before he had proceeded far, he heard the sound of horsemen following; and, turning round, saw a considerable party approaching at full speed. As their horses seemed fresh, and his was nearly worn out, he deemed it best to affect unconcern, and let the horsemen pass him if they would.

When they came up, although he was perfectly prepared to be questioned as to his journey, he was very much surprised to find himself suddenly seized, his arms pinioned, and his horse's bridle turned back the way he had come. He did everything he could, the fellow said, to deceive the enemy. He enacted Gabriel Jones to a hair; he talked about Egyptians and Amalekites, and the land of Canaan, and the oppressors of Israel; and even ended by singing a psalm.

But all would not do. His captors told him they knew him well, and everything concerning him; and one of them admonished him sharply not to mock God's saints; and calling him a son of Belial, accompanied his warning with a severe blow from the pommel of his sword.

Into whose hands he had fallen he knew not; but he was carried to a village about ten miles from Penfordbourne, and there he was secured in the upper room of a house, where his soul was tormented night and day with the godly exercises of the devout inhabitants. He was prevented from moving hand or foot by a rope, which, first twisted and tied round his wrists, was then bound fast about his ancles, at which point the ends were secured. In the morning following the day of his arrest, he had bread and water given him; but the only information he could gain from the person who brought it was, that he was sure either to be hanged or sent to the Colonies. This prospect gave poor William the energy of despair; and with his teeth he absolutely gnawed through the rope that bound him, ere the second day was completely over. He next, with the very same cord, once more united, let himself out of the window into the stable-yard, while all the house were howling their midnight devotions in the lower room. He had still a good way to drop down, he said, and sprained his leg in doing so; but this slight injury did not prevent him from proceeding to the stable, nor

from taking the strongest and freshest horse he could find, and setting off with all speed.

The sound of the animal's feet was the first announcement that the fanatics received of the departure of their prisoner; but, in a moment, three of them were on horseback after him, and the flight became a race. William, however, was as good a judge of horses as ever sat in a saddle; and having had his choice of the stable, his judgment was put to the fairest test; but in the present instance it justified him fully, and he still kept before his pursuers. Thus, taking the old castle on the height for his landmark, which he could dimly see through the twilight of a summer's night, he reached the hill above the village. There, however, those who followed, and who seemed to know our quarters as well as he did himself, threatened loudly to shoot him if he did not stop; and one of them fired his carbine, which wounded him in the cheek, as he turned his head to measure the distance he was off. The shot was returned by the out-lying picket; and finding that he had escaped past recovery, the fanatics gave up the pursuit and galloped off.

On inquiry, I found that he had been asked no questions, the persons who had taken him seeming perfectly as well acquainted with the design of his journey as he was himself, and laughing to scorn his attempts to deceive them, by assuming the cant of their tribe.

He had seen no one that he knew, though he declared that he had plainly distinguished the voice of Walter Dixon, the companion of our march; and upon him and Gabriel Jones all his suspicions fell, concerning the treachery which had evidently been practised. My own doubts certainly jumped with his, but, of course, I refrained from giving any opinion upon the subject till we had further proof: for why I suspected Walter Dixon, I knew not; and yet there was upon my mind a conviction of his treason very nearly as strong as if it had been the matter of direct evidence.

The news of the messenger's return had, by this time, reached the house, and his story was just finished when my brother arrived. Frank heard William Fells repeat his tale in silence, made no comment, ordered the outposts to be reinforced, the regiment back to quarters, and merely remarking, that we must wait till mid-day for the answer to his last despatches, took his way back to the house.

I followed him instantly, and with the heat of youth and impatience, remonstrated vehemently against this new delay. It was clear from the information which William had obtained, that Lord Goring was encamped a little to the west of Maidstone; it was equally clear, that no force of any magnitude

lay between us and the head quarters of the cavaliers. To march forward, then, appeared to me to be our bounden duty, without suffering a moment's delay to snatch from us the golden boon of opportunity. I urged, I remonstrated, I entreated; while he walked on as calmly as if I had been talking of antique Rome. At length, I lost patience; I spoke with heat and passion; and gave Frank the advantage of my intemperance.

"Sir," he replied, at length, after he had heard me with a degree of irritating silence, which provoked me still more—"Sir, you are my brother, and therefore I do not punish you as your insolence deserves; but as your commanding officer, I order you to be silent."

"Well, Frank—well," replied I, "my patience may last till twelve o'clock; but if we do not march at that hour, I may be tempted to do what both you and I may regret."

He made no reply, but entered the house; and I could see by the light which stood in the hall that he was as pale as death. Day was now beginning to break, and hurrying back to the village, I took care that William Fells should have repose and good attendance, and after that busied myself, till the usual hour of breakfast returned, in all the little details which every man may find in plenty to occupy spare minutes. I then went back once more to the mansion-house, where I found my brother alone in the eating-hall, gazing thoughtfully from the window. Shortly after I had entered, a servant announced that Lady Eleanor, finding herself somewhat indisposed, had not yet risen; but begged that her guests would not wait for her, but would excuse her absence from their morning meal.

Frank coloured, and then turned pale; and sitting down to table, the breakfast passed in almost total silence. Lady Eleanor appeared as we were about to rise; and it was evident that she had been weeping long and bitterly, though many an after effort had been used to efface the traces of that sad employment. We were all under considerable embarrassment, and the only question asked was, when Lady Eleanor's sweet voice demanded—hesitating as it struggled with tears—when the march of the regiment was to take place, as she feared, by the movements she had heard, that it was ordered early.

My brother replied, that it certainly would not proceed till after mid-day. It wanted but a few brief hours to that time; but even the certainty of those short hours seemed a relief to our too captivating entertainer: and as soon as I could do so politely, I left them to themselves, and after wandering some time through the park, went back to the village, and wasted away there the time till noon.

During these moments of meditation, I blamed myself somewhat severely for my conduct to Frank in the morning; and though determined, if he still lingered with Lady Eleanor, to take a decided part myself, and join Lord Goring, I at the same time resolved to speak to him coolly and respectfully, and, as far as possible, conceal my conviction of the weakness which actuated his delay.

I now suffered noon and half an hour more to go by, in hopes of the messenger's return; but at the end of that time I turned my steps back to the house. Its beautiful mistress was sitting beneath one of the large trees on the lawn, playing idly, but gracefully, with some of the green branches that drooped within her reach; while Frank, stretched on the grass at her feet, raised his eyes to hers as they conversed, and seemed drawing life and spirit from those bright orbs alone. Doffing my hat to the lady as I approached, I reported to my brother, in as few words as possible, that the expected messenger had not come.

"Well, then, we must wait till he does," was all the reply he thought fit to make.

"I am sorry that you think so, Colonel Masterton," I answered, "for you cannot but be aware that every moment lost in the present state of the King's affairs, is perilous in the extreme; that Lord Goring himself enjoined all speed upon our march, and that he is even now probably struggling in vain with a superior enemy, because the reinforcements which ought to arrive——"

"Sir, do you dare to dispute my commands?" cried my brother, starting suddenly upon his feet, with his face glowing like fire. "By Heaven, if you presume to show any more of this insubordinate spirit, I will chastise you as I would the lowest trooper in the regiment."

There was a vehemence in his gesture, a fury in his eyes, a loudness in his tone, that seemed scarcely sane. His whole nature appeared changed, and I almost feared his passion would have carried him to the extreme of striking me. It luckily happened, however, that his intemperance was remarked by one to whom he appeared to have transferred that command which he once had possessed over himself.

"Frank! Frank! for God's sake, cease!" cried Lady Eleanor, forgetting all reserve in her alarm, and laying her hand upon his arm. "If you love me, use not such language towards your brother.—Nay, Colonel Masterton, do I plead in vain?" she added, seeing him about to speak again.

"Not so, dear lady," he replied; "I was but about to give an order to the captain of the third troop.—Captain Master-

ton," he proceeded, sternly, "you will be so good, as with all diligence to reconnoitre the country between this place and Wrotham, and particularly between Ditton and Malling. Gain what intelligence you can; and when you have done so, report your return with all speed. Let me not be disobeyed."

My determination was now taken; and farther discussion seemed to be perfectly vain. The commands which I had received, it was clear, were given by my brother only as a means of employing me elsewhere, and of covering the real motives of fresh delay—delay which might bring upon his character, as a gentleman and a soldier, reproaches which no after-conduct would ever wipe out. I could have wept for his weakness, for his infatuation, for his loss of honour; but I felt that I had a superior duty to perform; and I resolved to execute it. I accordingly retired in silence, and ordering out my troop, proceeded directly towards Wrotham, near which place William Fells had ascertained that Lord Goring was quartered. It was farther, however, than I thought to find it, and about four o'clock, we reached a hill from which we could see a considerable way over the country beyond.

A grove of large trees, at about two miles' distance, covered a considerable space of ground upon the direct road, and shut out the village towards which we were wending. Before us, crowning the hill, was a small farm-house, with its innumerable sheds and court-yards, its ploughshares lying in summer idleness about the doors, and the patriarchal cock strutting and scratching on the customary dunghill. Notwithstanding the rural dirt, which is, in fact, no dirt, there was an air of great comfort and neatness and repose about the place; and pausing to refresh our horses, I purchased a cask of beer for the men, and sat and contemplated the calm rich valleys before me, looking as quiet and as peaceful as if they had never been trod by the iron step of war. The good man of the house told me that Lord Goring had held his head-quarters near Wrotham for two days, and it was supposed, would march for Maidstone early the next morning, but he could give me no account of his numbers, although he said that the cavaliers mustered pretty strong, and neither Fairfax nor Skippon had made any fresh movements against them.

I listened to his words rather idly, and remained sitting calmly on the shafts of one of the carts, letting my eye stray into this valley and that dell, as they lay in sunshiny mistiness beneath my glance, and fancying a thousand little quiet, tranquil, sequestered nooks, in the shelter of their bosoms, where the harsh and eager world was only known by hearsay. As I continued to gaze upon the prospect, the sun-beams were sud-

denly reflected from one particular point, by some bright substance, and gradually a number of brilliant lines were seen proceeding in regular array, along what appeared to be a narrow lane. That they were not cuirasses was evident, from the size; and concluding them to be the pike-heads of some regiment of infantry marching down to join the royal forces, I sat calmly waiting till the horses were rested. Before long, I lost sight of the gleam as the pikemen wound onwards, and the prospect resumed its sleepy tranquillity. A minute or two after, however, I heard the report of a cannon, and then another, succeeded by a sharp but desultory discharge of fire-arms, which left no doubt that an engagement of some kind was taking place beyond the grove of trees which obstructed my sight.

In that direction lay Wrotham and the forces of Lord Norwich; and I could not doubt that, whether the troops I had just seen were friends or enemies, an attack had been made upon his quarters. Such a moment was not to be lost; and with a beating heart, full of eagerness mingled with agitation, I called the troopers to mount, and galloped down, as fast as my horse would carry me, towards the right hand side of the grove. I do not think we were five minutes in reaching the turn of the wood, which was encircled by the high wall of some gentleman's park, of which it formed a part. My troop, I cannot but own, was in some disarray by this time, from the rapidity of our advance, and I paused for a moment to put the men in order, while the mingled sound of musketry, and human voices, and charging cavalry, came loud and close upon the ear, and two or three masterless horses passed us with wild speed.

I then drew my men out from behind the wall, and in a moment, the strange and fearful sight of a field of battle was all before my eyes. The whole, for a moment, appeared smoke and confusion. Handfuls of horse were scattered disjointed over a wide piece of common ground, and a number of men on foot were evidently flying over the hill. In the meanwhile, the roar of artillery came from a small battery planted on the slope in front of some cottages, whose white faces I could scarcely see for the smoke; and near the same spot appeared a group of horsemen, one of whom had his hand extended towards the centre of the field, where the most serious struggle of the day was going on. At that point a large dark body of pikemen were seen advancing with a steady unshaken front towards the artillery I have mentioned, notwithstanding the repeated charges of a gallant regiment of cavalry, which twice within my sight hurled itself upon the pikes, and was driven back with the loss

of some of its numbers, who were instantly trodden under foot by the still advancing infantry.

I saw at once by their brighter dresses and fluttering scarfs, that the cavalry in that part of the field belonged to the royal forces. They evidently made no impression on the parliamentary infantry; and though inexperienced enough in the art of war, I felt sure that the only chance of breaking that long deep line of pikes, would be gained by a charge upon their flank, which the position of my troop just commanded. We were about three hundred yards from them. We mustered but ninety-seven men; but the sight of the energetic strife before us—the animated outcry of the fight—and the impatience which had gathered in our bosoms under a long and irritating delay, were all in our favour. At the very moment that I saw the royalist cavalry once more rallying for the charge, I, too, gave the word to my men, and, dashing down upon the enemy's flank, in a compact mass, shouting loudly, "God and the King!" we were in an instant—almost before I knew it—in the very heart of the Parliament's infantry. We had cut our way through, literally like a cannon-shot. The third and fourth rank of pikemen were all in disorder; the second rank turned upon the enemies whom they found so unexpectedly in their rear; the first gave way before the renewed charge of the cavaliers in front; and as the spell of their previous success had been their union and firm order, the moment their ranks were broken they began to fly. Fear, the most infectious of all diseases, spread amongst them, and they dispersed in every direction long before the chances of the day had really gone against them.

This I beheld after I rose, for one grim fellow had stopped me in career, as I was urging on my horse still farther into their ranks, by burying his pike in my poor charger's poitral. I struck at him as I fell, but could not reach him; and he was just preparing the same fate for me which had befallen poor Sorel, when the front line was broken by the cavaliers, and he was shot dead by a pistol-ball. Unable to follow the pursuit, I stood and gazed around me, in hopes of seeing some unappropriated horse which might put me again at the head of my men, who had passed on some way before me.

The Royalists were now rallying all around, and it appeared to me that I could now distinguish on the field several more regiments than I had seen at first. The group of officers on the hill were also, by this time, advancing along the field; and one of them, a middle-aged hale-looking man, with quick, keen eyes, and a firm determined mouth, rode up to me with the somewhat mixed exclamation of—

"Who the devil are you, sir? that come in here to win a battle you have nothing to do with? Cods fish! the person that made that charge on the flank of the rebels ought scarcely to be unknown to me. Who the devil are you, sir; for I have forgot your phiz?"

"My name is Masterton, sir," I replied; "I came up to the field by accident at a fortunate moment."

"And of that fortunate moment you made a skilful and gallant use," replied the officer, more seriously. "Let me tell you, sir, that they are happy men to whom such accidents happen. But how is it, Colonel Masterton? I expected to see an older man and more soldiers!"

"You mistake me for my brother, sir, I perceive," was my reply. "I am but Colonel Masterton's younger brother, to whom, if, as I suspect, you be Lord Norwich, you sent a commission as captain of a troop of horse."

"Oons! man, and where is your brother, then?" demanded the general. "Where is his regiment? Why is he not here at the hour of need? But we must speak of all this hereafter. There, mount that horse, my young gallant! Gather your troop together, and follow that road to the right; keep the pikemen who have fled that way from forming again on our flank. But go no farther than the mill," he added, hallooing after me. "Go no farther than the mill, then come back to Wrotham and report yourself."

He then turned to give other orders for the pursuit; and, obeying his commands, I followed the road to the right. About a hundred yards from the common, I found a considerable body of the enemy already beginning to rally; but they had just been defeated—we had just been victorious; and dashing at once in amongst them, we again dispersed them over the hedges and through the fields, cutting down a number, who were either bold enough to resist or too slow to escape. We saw many, too, of the unhappy wretches flying here and there, several of them desperately wounded, and some of them with scarcely sufficient strength to totter on. My troopers, whose fresh taste of blood had done but little service to their humanity, would fain have terminated the sufferings of those poor fugitives in the most summary manner, but, with some trouble, I compelled them to refrain; and after pursuing our way to the mill, uninterrupted, we returned by the same road, and sought the little village, near which I had seen the artillery of the royal force.

Not knowing where to quarter my men, I drew them up by the side of the green, and went on foot to seek Lord Goring. A crowd of officers and soldiers near one particular cottage

directed me to him, and entering at once the little room in which he was, I found him sitting with two or three other gentlemen—all just as they left the field—at an oaken table, on which was a large piece of roast meat and a salad. A number of people stood about him receiving orders; and his dinner was continually interrupted by the necessity of laying down his knife to sign various papers, or point out various movements, on a map that lay beside him.

Several of these affairs were thus transacted before his eye fell upon me; but when it did so he exclaimed, "Well, Master Harry Masterton, I owe you more thanks than I had time to pay you this morning, for your good help in the hour of need; and I now call these gentlemen to witness how high I hold your conduct; for under God—and I am no fanatic to say to Him belongs the first word of thanks"—and he reverently touched his hat. "But as I was saying, under God, the success of to-day's skirmish is mainly attributable to you. Remark, the forces I expected not having joined me, I had but fifteen hundred men on the field, and had my position here been forced, I should have lost my communication with Hales and the rest; and probably we might never have been able to have effected our junction. This gives greater importance to this affair than the mere business of the skirmish itself, which, as I said before, was as successful as it has been, only, I believe, through your fortunately coming up on the enemy's flank, seeing the precise moment when a charge could be effective, and executing gallantly what was judiciously devised. Gentlemen cavaliers, who have served the King so often, do not think I imply blame to you by my praise of this young soldier. I do not believe there is one of you but would have done the same had you been placed as he was; and as you were placed, you acted as well as men could act; and you, sir, think it sufficient honour that I say you have behaved as well as the oldest and best servants of his majesty could have done, had they been placed in your situation."

It may be easily supposed what I felt at such a public address from the commander-in-chief, and my pleasure would have been unmixed and overflowing, had I not feared that he would every moment ask me in the same public way the cause of my brother's absence. But something in my manner, I know not what, had shown to his keen eye that all was not quite right in those respects; and with a delicacy of feeling which I could not have expected from his general reputation, his habits, or the circumstances of the moment, he refrained from questioning me farther till he could do so in private.

I stood for some time, however, in momentary expectation of

having some inquiry put to me, for which, Heaven knows, I had no answer ready; and I contrived, in a very few minutes, to torture myself with imaginary interrogations and replies, far more painfully than if what is emphatically called *the question* had been really applied to me. Lord Norwich, however, seemed to have forgotten all about my brother, but at length, calling me nearer to him, he demanded what I had done with my troopers; and being informed that I had left them drawn up without till I had waited upon him, he directed me to speak with the quarter-master of his own regiment, concerning the disposal of them for the night. He then added, in a low tone, "Return in an hour, young gentleman; you will then find me alone, and I would have some more conversation with you."

Glad to escape, I proceeded to find out the officer to whom he referred me; and having made all the necessary arrangements, inspected the troop, and ascertained the amount of our loss in killed and wounded, which was comparatively small, I superintended the bringing in of two of our injured companions who had remained upon the field, and then turned towards the village again.

I had mingled in the fray; I had aided in the bloodshed; with all my small power I had edged the sword of the destroying angel; and during the whole, I had felt very little after the first moment, but the eagerness with which a boy pursues a butterfly or a bird; yet as I again passed over the field, and had in one place to pick my way between five or six naked corpses, which some fiends of women had already stripped and left glaring with their gashes in the evening sunset, I own a chill feeling of horror came over me, and I could not but comment sadly on the bloody work in which I had been so ardently engaged.

Was it glory? I asked myself, to make such things as that? Was he the most honourable who could devise the quickest means of changing the godlike human form, with all the mighty beauty of life and energy, to the cold, meaningless, leaden things, that lay cumbering the bloody earth, over which they had lately moved in hope and expectation? But, alas! glory and honour, and all the wishes, desires, and pleasures, which man dignifies with fine or tuneful names, will but few of them bear the microscope.

CHAPTER IX.

THE hour was just expired when I again turned to Lord Goring's quarters, which in fact consisted of a mere cottage. He was not yet alone, but his present occupation seemed only the discussion of a bottle of strong waters, with a gentleman who sat near him, and who, the moment after, rose and left the chamber, while the general, with his own hand, restored the spirits to a nook in a corner cupboard, from which the bottle had been withdrawn.

"Sit, young gentleman," he said, as soon as we were alone, "sit and let me hear why, instead of sending a single troop, your brother did not bring down the whole regiment he had commission to raise. I would not speak with you publicly on a matter where I may have to speak harshly."

"My brother, my lord," I replied, "waited your lordship's orders. Two messengers have been sent you from Penford-bourne."

"None have reached me, sir," he answered, hastily—"none have reached me. Orders!—oons! Sir, had he not orders to join me with all speed!"

"Till this morning, my lord," I said, in reply, "he did not know the position of your lordship's forces."

"Then why did he not come when he did know it?" demanded Lord Norwich, vehemently. "Sir, there is something more in this. I have heard of a regiment being quartered for three days or more at Penford-bourne, while the commanding officer revelled at the house of a certain fair widow—or wife—or something—ha, sir! Is your brother a coward?"

"My family, in general, does not produce such things," I replied, reddening; and he instantly added:—

"No, no; I do not suppose it does. But what am I to think, young gentleman? Here, your brother, with orders to make all speed and join me without delay, halts for three days within fifteen or sixteen miles of my head quarters, leaves me to be attacked—ay, and nearly defeated by the rebels, and sends me but the succour of an hundred men. Sir, the very fact of his sending you was either an insult to himself or to me. If you could come, he could come."

"Nay, sir," I answered, "my brother did not contemplate my joining you. He sent me out to reconnoitre, and hearing the firing, I came down to be of what poor service I could."

"What, then, I have not to thank him even for your presence?" cried the general. "'Tis well! 'tis mighty well!"

Reconnoitre, sir! In three days' time he should have been as fully acquainted with the whole country round him as I am with the surface of that table. Reconnoitre! Did he always send out a whole troop to reconnoitre for three days, before he moved the regiment fifteen miles? Sir, what is the meaning of all this? I charge you, on your honour, tell me why your brother has delayed his march?"

"I can but state his motives, my lord, as they were stated to me," I answered.

"Pshaw" he cried, interrupting me: "Is your brother tampering with the rebels? Is he waiting to see which party will be victorious? Is he afraid, or disaffected, stupid, or idle? In any case, sir, he is unworthy and unfit to hold the command he does; and by virtue of the authority reposed in my hands by his majesty, I am determined to supersede him."

"Nay, my lord—nay," I exclaimed, seeing the imputation likely to fall upon Frank, worse than even the truth could have made it. "For God's sake do not, on the same day you honour me by your thanks for a good service, do a thing that must blast the character of my brother for ever."

"Each line of conduct, sir, must have its reward," replied Lord Norwich, sternly. "You have acted well, with skill, coolness, and courage, such as we seldom see in a man's first field; and I have thanked, and would reward you, were there any means of doing so. But your brother has neglected his duty, if not betrayed his trust, and he, too, must have his reward."

"Then, my lord," I interposed, somewhat too boldly, perhaps, "let both our rewards be in words. You thank me, and I am more than sufficiently paid. Reprimand my brother, if you please, and he will be more than sufficiently punished."

"More than sufficiently, sir!" exclaimed Lord Norwich, striding up and down the room; "I tell you, sir, that in times like these, when activity and zeal are everything, if I were to have your brother out, and shoot him on the green, he would not be *more than sufficiently* punished."

"Indeed, my lord," I ventured to reply, "Frank is more to be pitied than blamed in the present case. He has been, I believe, deceived by false information, and certainly is entangled in a way that he finds it difficult to break through——"

"Where, sir? How?" demanded the general, whose whole mind was full of military matters alone. "How is he entangled? Show me what enemy opposes his march. Sir, there is not a corps between him and me, as you yourself well know. What enemy entangles him, sir? say!"

"No enemy, my lord, but pretended friends," I replied, "who, working on his mind by means of his affections, do not give his

judgment fair play. Indeed, my lord, I would answer for it, that if he could but be got away from the place where he is now, he would prove one of the best officers under your command."

The moment I had spoken, I regretted what I had said, fearful that my words might draw on inquiries which I could neither answer with honour, nor refuse to answer without suspicion; but, as very frequently happens, my reply, in its very incautiousness, produced a better effect than more studied sentences might perhaps have done.

"Ay! ay!" exclaimed the general, with a grim smile, as if a new light had suddenly broken in upon him. "Ay! ay! I understand you now. A woman, is it? Damn them all! they have ruined more soldiers than enough. Women and wine, sir! women and wine! they have done more to defeat King Charles's armies than all the Fairfaxes, or Skippons, or Cromwells, that ever were born. Women and wine, sir! women and wine!" and at those ominous words, he shook his head with a melancholy frown.

I would willingly have explained to Lord Norwich, that the feelings which detained my brother from his duty, though equally blameable in their effects, were not of the coarse nature which he seemed to suppose; but, without giving a moment's attention, he cut sharp across me, returning, as was his custom, apparently, to his own particular train of ideas.

"Nevertheless," continued he, "the King's service, sir, must not be neglected for any such toys; and the breach of duty in your brother is not the less culpable, whatever may be its cause. However, sir, a sort of fellow-feeling for your brother's situation makes me give him one chance, as well as the pleasure of showing how much I esteem your conduct this day. My intention is, sir, to supersede your brother, and name you to the command."

I started at this sudden announcement, and was about to remonstrate, but he stopped me, exclaiming, in a sharp voice, "Do not interrupt me, sir; I have let you talk too much already. You shall put your new commission in your pocket; and as you seem to think Colonel Masterton may behave better if removed from his present quarters, you shall use every means of persuasion you think fit, to make him march the regiment instantly. If he comply, you may burn the supersedure; but if he neglect or refuse, you have my orders to take the command instantly, and lead your troopers to meet me at Maidstone. Let me see! Hales joins to-morrow morning at four: we march at nine. As you have a long route before you, I give you till the day after to-morrow, at eight in the morning, to be

at the little green in front of the Bush alehouse, out of Maidstone gates. There halt and wait for orders. If you do not receive them in an hour, gain what information you can, and make all speed to join me wherever I may be. But, mark me ! Do not let your fellows drink, for we shall have sharp work before that day be over, I doubt. Fairfax is pursuing me with all speed ; but with your regiment, and the other reinforcements, I doubt not we may stand against him by that time. Now, sir, good night ! Be ready to set out at four to-morrow morning, before which hour you shall have the papers I mentioned."

His tone implied that no reply must be made ; and I accordingly bowed and left the room in silence. At the door of the cottage I met a crowd of young cavaliers, by whom I was instantly surrounded, and, with many a greeting and welcome, and various expressions of thanks for my assistance that day, I was dragged away, not unwillingly, to supper. Since an early hour of the morning I had tasted nothing, and therefore did ample justice to the viands set before me ; but I soon found that many a midnight bowl was likely to follow the more solid affair of eating, and my whole object became to escape from the carousal that was about to commence. We were twenty persons in a little low-roofed room, whose dingy rafters bespoke centuries of smoke and uncleanness ; and the smell of various liquors, from rum to aqua vitæ, as well as the roar of various voices shouting toasts, singing songs, and swearing oaths, was perfectly overpowering.

After drinking several toasts, amongst which only I remember, " Hellfire for Fairfax, and damnation to Oliver's nose," I was allowed to make my exit, on the plea of having ridden far before the skirmish, as well as fought hard in it ; and finding my way to the barn in which my men were quartered, I lay down in the loft and fell sound asleep. The next morning, by the grey of the dawn, Sir George Warrel's trumpets, as he brought up his large reinforcements, wakened me from my slumber ; and in a few minutes my troop were on horseback and ready to set out. About a quarter of an hour after, an officer delivered to me a sealed packet from Lord Goring, addressed, " To the hands of the Honourable Master Harry Masterton," and containing in writing the directions which had been given me the night before, signed by the Earl. The moment I received it, I put the troop in motion, and once more returned towards Penford-bourne.

The situation in which I was placed was as painful as can be well conceived, although it gave me the only chance of forcing Frank to do his duty and redeem his honour, by breaking through the snares with which he was enthralled, and by now

acting vigorously in the service of the King. The method, however, in which I was to proceed was the question. I knew my own impatience of disposition on the one hand, and his inclination to arbitrary measures on the other, too well to doubt that the very fact of my having joined Lord Goring and been absent the whole day, would be a cause of quarrel between us, which might heat and irritate us both, before we came to the more important consideration of hurrying our march to Maidstone. Nevertheless, I felt pretty sure that, bearing to Frank the express commands of the general-in-chief, I should be able to prevail on him to obey them; and I resolved to master my own temper as far as possible in the discussion, that he might find no excuse for neglecting the orders, in the conduct of the person who bore them. At the same time, I determined to act as warily towards him as the circumstances permitted; and while I gave him Lord Norwich's commands to proceed to Maidstone, not to name even his supersedure but on the last necessity.

While these thoughts were passing through my brain, and working themselves into resolutions, a horseman suddenly crossed the road, along which we were travelling. As soon as he saw us, he drew in his bridle, and paused for a moment to look at the troop as it approached. He seemed to hesitate whether he should go on or turn; but the moment after he rode up to me, saying, "I give you good morrow, Captain Masterton," and I recognised the companion of our march to Penford-bourne, Walter Dixon.

My resolution was instantly taken, though perhaps it was a somewhat rash one, and I replied, "Good morrow, Master Dixon; you are doubtless coming to join us at Penford-bourne. We will ride thither together. I am just returning from Wrotham."

"I will go part of the way," replied he, "but I cannot go the whole, for I have business at Ashford, before I join you finally. What news from Wrotham? How does Goring get on? He makes a stand, I find."

"Nay, nay, you must ride on with me," I rejoined. "My brother will be so glad to see you;" and as I spoke, I made a sign, as privately as possible, for those who were behind to ride up.

"I cannot, indeed," he replied. "Business of a particular kind will compel me to leave you about a mile hence; but I will ride so far with you, and you shall tell me the news."

"Your riding must not stop there, Master Walter Dixon," I replied, spurring forward my horse, and catching him by the

collar, "you must with me to Penford-bourne, whatever business you have at Ashford."

"How now, sir!" he exclaimed, attempting to draw his sword. "Who dares lay hands upon me?" But by this time the two headmost men of the file were upon him, and resistance was in vain.

"What mad suspicion has crossed your brain now, sir?" he demanded, angrily. "Methought you had laid aside all those wild caprices at Amesbury. Do you jest, sir? or are you serious? Pray of what am I accused now?"

"I am perfectly serious, Master Dixon," I replied; "and as to what you are accused of, you shall hear a part in that meadow, where I intend to halt for half an hour. Look well to your prisoner, corporal; and rather shoot him than let him escape."

So saying, I rode on, and halted the troop for a little rest, in one of the fine green fields that skirt along the windings of the Stoure. There I called William Fells to my side, and, while the prisoner was kept at a distance, bade him endeavour to remember anything he had overheard Walter Dixon say, while he had been in the hands of the fanatics. What he had heard, he replied, consisted alone of detached sentences; but of these he repeated to me several; and having ordered the prisoner to be brought before me, I said to him—

"Master Walter Dixon, my servant, William Fells—whom you now see, not for the first time—declares that he has overheard from your lips a base plot for betraying the trust my brother placed in you, and for detaining him at Penford-bourne, till his own honour and the opportunity of serving the King were lost together. This may be all a mistake, but you will be good enough just to pronounce a few sentences in his presence, that he may judge better of the voice. Will you have the kindness to repeat after me these words," and fixing my eyes intently upon his countenance, I added one of the scraps with which William had furnished me; it was to the following effect: "So, he replied that they were at their wits' end, for they could not detach a sufficient force to keep him in check, while they threw forward three regiments upon Wrotham; and I told him in reply, that if they would give me the lands, I would undertake to keep him three days longer where he was. But he said that he could not undertake it—that the council must judge: and then I said I would do nothing more, for notwithstanding all I had done—prevented him from joining Goring, and given them the opportunity of cutting his regiment to pieces—the council neither seconded the design, nor seemed inclined to grant me the lands."

William Fells' excellent memory had enabled him to retain this disjointed speech very perfectly; and when he repeated it to me, he persisted in declaring that Walter Dixon, and none other, had spoken it. To my surprise, however, my prisoner went over it without a change of countenance that I could discover, although I kept my eyes upon him, both with the intention of catching any effect it might produce, and of increasing his confusion if he were really guilty. He made me reiterate various parts more than once, as if he did not remember the whole; and when he had done, he calmly demanded if it was alone from some fancied resemblance, reported by a servant, between his voice and that of another person, whom the servant even had never seen, that I thought fit to stop a gentleman on the highway, and accuse a person, who on one occasion had guided me clear of an enemy, that would have destroyed both me and mine but for his interference?

He spoke with something between sneer and reproach in his tone, and certainly there never was a more artful piece of acting than that which he displayed upon the occasion; but, remembering what I had heard myself at the hill, I replied, that it was not on such circumstances alone that I accused him; for that plenty of other proof existed against him, as he would find hereafter. Resolving to try him a little farther, I then ordered the regiment to horse, pretending to be surprised at the lateness of the hour; and observing aloud to William Fells, that if we did not make haste, we should not arrive before the execution of Gabriel Jones. This I said with my back towards the prisoner; but turning sharply round, the moment it had passed my lips, I saw him become first deadly pale, and then as crimson as my sword-knot. So far my suspicions were confirmed; and I resolved, even if I could prove nothing against Master Walter Dixon, to keep him, at all risks, so securely, that he could betray us no farther than he had done.

The troop now marched forward; and without accident or interruption we arrived at Penford-bourne. My brother was not with the regiment, and the news that he had not set his foot in the village that day, evidently showed that his infatuation and indifference had increased rather than diminished during our absence.

Leaving Walter Dixon well guarded, and with strict orders to the sentries to allow no one to speak with him, I proceeded to the mansion-house; but there also I was disappointed in my search. Frank had ridden out with Lady Eleanor; and I dismounted to wait his return; but finding that I was only irritating myself, as I sat alone, with the expectation of what was to ensue, and was getting up in my own imagination a variety

of angry observations for my brother, and angry replies for myself, which only prepared my mind to be irascible and petulant, I very soon mounted a fresh horse, and rode out to seek the party. I met the whole cavalcade not a hundred yards from the park gates: Frank evidently in high spirits, and the lady all that was gay and lovely. I could not but perceive that my coming overshadowed the brightness of the morning to them both. Lady Eleanor drew a deep sigh, but welcomed me courteously. My brother's brow gathered into a frown; and remarking upon my absence from quarters the night before, he trusted, he said, that I had some good cause to assign for not returning.

I replied that I had; and would communicate it to him at leisure; and, turning my horse's head, I accompanied them on their return.

Scarcely had we entered the gates, and turned into one of the long deep avenues which was skirted on the right hand by a mass of broken copsewood, when a man, evidently a gentleman, habited in black, crossed the avenue; and without taking any apparent notice of our party, entered the copse. Lady Eleanor drew in her horse with such a sudden recoil, as almost to throw him on his haunches.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Frank, who had not seen the figure. "You are ill, Ellen. How deadly pale you look. For Heaven's sake, what is the matter?"

"Nothing! nothing!" replied she, hastily; and seeing me about to enter the copse after the intruder, she added: "Do not! do not, for God's sake! I know who it is."

"Who what is?" demanded my brother. "I saw no one but ourselves."

"Oh, it was but the forester," she replied. "But he came across me so suddenly, he made me start. Let us proceed, gentlemen."

We accordingly moved on, Frank satisfied that it was the forester who had caused the lady's sudden start; and I equally convinced that it was not. Lady Eleanor, however, did not recover her composure completely; and though she spoke of various subjects as we rode forward, though she strove for cheerfulness, and even for mirth, her conversation was broken, her answers wandered from the point, and her gaiety was evidently the effort of a heart ill at rest, to cover the cause of its disturbance. As we approached the house, she complained of fatigue, and on dismounting retired to her own apartment.

CHAPTER X.

FRANK, with a step of slow deliberation, proceeded to the apartment in which Lady Eleanor usually sat. What was in his thoughts I know not—whether he felt that he could scarcely blame me for a breach of duty, when he himself was neglecting his own; or whether his whole mind was occupied with her who had just left us, and the idea of his military command came across him but as a brief and troublesome memory to be banished as soon as possible, I cannot tell. However, he sauntered into the room, with deep thought written in his eyes, but with listless indifference in his walk and manner. He said nothing concerning my prolonged absence; but, advancing towards the windows, took up a book which Lady Eleanor had been reading, laid it down again, after a brief and casual glance; raised her lute from the cushions on which it rested, ran his hand over the strings, drawing forth some discordant notes, then replaced it where he found it; and at length turning to the window, he gazed out for a moment or two in silence. I was silent also, and stood watching his movements, with mingled feelings of pain and impatience. In a few minutes he turned; and, as if he felt it absolutely necessary to say something, he asked, “Well, Harry! have you reconnoitred the country between this and Wrotham?” speaking in a very different tone from that which he had used in the first irritation of my importunate return.

“I have, Frank,” I replied, “and have to inform you, on that head, that there is not the slightest appearance of any enemy from this place to the head-quarters of Lord Norwich.” At the latter words of my reply he started, and turning very red, demanded—

“Then did you visit Lord Goring’s quarters? Did you see Lord Goring, sir? How came you to disobey your orders? I bade you reconnoitre the country, not proceed to the army.”

“To reconnoitre the country between this and Wrotham, were the commands I received,” was my reply: “in doing so, I found Lord Goring attacked in position by the forces of the rebels, and of course yielded him that aid and assistance which, as a servant of his majesty, I was bound to do.”

“You have disobeyed my orders, sir!” cried he, drawing nearer to me, with a countenance in which anger, and agitation, and shame were strangely mingled,—“you have disobeyed my orders! What did Lord Goring say? What part had you in

the action? When did it take place? What questions did he ask? How was your troop? ——”

How many more interrogatories he would have addressed to me, I do not know, had not a servant entered, and presented a billet, which he said had been left for Colonel Masterton by a stranger, who stayed not a moment at the door. At first, Frank scarcely noticed either the servant or the note that had been given him; but the lackey, seeing that in his agitation he was twisting the paper to pieces, ventured to turn back and tell him farther, that the stranger had been very particular in directing that it should be delivered immediately, and *with care*. My brother then opened it, and ran his eye over the contents—he paused—read it again more attentively, muttering to himself—“Well! mighty well! If that may settle it!—So!—Now, sir,” he continued, turning once more towards me with a cooler, but a still sterner air—“now, sir, what said Lord Norwich!”

“He blamed highly our delay at this place,” replied I: “he said it was unnecessary, inexcusable, and wrong in every sense of the word ——”

“That he and I will settle when we meet,” interrupted Frank; “doubtless, according to your showing, sir, my conduct might be wrong and inexcusable.”

“You do not do me justice, Frank,” I answered; “you do not, indeed. I gave your own motives to Lord Goring, as you had given them to me. I did all I could to shield your honour and your character from suspicion, if not direct accusation.”

“Who dared impugn my honour and my character, sir?” demanded he, his eyes every moment flashing more brightly, and his cheek growing redder and more red: “who dare suspect me of anything dishonourable?”

“Your commander-in-chief, Frank Masterton!” I answered, becoming somewhat heated in my turn: “He said that he heard you had been here three days; that in three days you should have known every rood of the country round you; that your orders were precise to join him without delay; and that want of zeal and activity in the present case was a worse crime than even cowardice. He said, moreover, that you had left him to be attacked through utter negligence or treachery; ay, and to be defeated also, as he would have been, he owned, had not a part of our regiment come up unexpectedly.”

“How was that, sir? Speak! explain!” exclaimed my brother. “Do you mean to say that you—you, and your handful of troopers—turned the battle in favour of Lord Goring? The royal cause must be at the dregs, indeed,” he added, with one of his bitter sneers, “if Harry Masterton and fifty men could save the cavaliers from defeat!”

"A less thing might have done it," replied I; and I proceeded to explain to him what had occurred, together with the particulars I had gathered during my stay at Wrotham, concerning the events which had taken place previous to my arrival. I pointed out to him, that Lord Norwich had but fifteen hundred men at the village, and that the parliamentary generals had endeavoured, by forcing his position with three regiments, while they kept the other body of the Royalists in check with a superior force, not only to prevent the junction of the two divisions, but to turn the flank of the one near Rochester, and cut them both to pieces in detail. I informed him how far this plan had succeeded, when the fortunate accident of our arrival, not only at the precise moment, but on the precise spot necessary to success, shook the advancing column of infantry, and favoured the last charge of the cavaliers.

As I proceeded, the countenance of my brother changed; the flame of duty, patriotism, and honour, which had been smothered in other feelings, but not extinguished, blazed up again in his bosom; the aspiration for glory and distinction, which all feel or have felt, revived; the colour came and went in his cheek, with a fitful rapidity, almost equal to the flickering of the summer lightning on the verge of the evening sky; and as I spoke of strife, and conquest, and success, and triumph, he cast himself down on the cushions, and hid his face in his hands, exclaiming, "And I not there! and I not there! Good God, and I not there!"

"Frank!" said I, laying my hand upon his arm, with a firm, but kindly pressure, "there is a way of retrieving all, if you will but embrace it. I bear you Lord Goring's orders to march immediately for Maidstone; he expects you there to meet him by to-morrow morning, at eight o' the clock, as he intends, if possible, to make a stand there. A general battle must immediately take place; the former was but a skirmish. March with all speed, command your regiment in the moment of danger and difficulty, and win glory that will render all mistakes forgotten at once."

The good spirit was awakened; and starting up from the couch, my brother declared he would go, if—he was resolved to go, but—

I feel sure that I could have soon dissolved those *ifs* and *buts* far more easily than Hamilear's son reduced the rocks of the Alpine passes. All might have been explained, all might have been remedied, but at that moment Lady Eleanor entered the room, and Frank's good resolves were petrified in a moment. The inferior soul resumed its ascendancy; the confidence between us was destroyed; and he felt ashamed, I am sure, at

having yielded, even as much as he had done, to counsels which would have freed him from the mental thralldom that bound him down.

"I fear I interrupt you, gentlemen," said Lady Eleanor, pausing in her advance; "I fear I break in upon some matter of deep import;" and her eye glanced from the now animated countenance of my brother to mine, striving to read whether the feelings that sparkled in each were amicable or angry. I was silent; for I felt that she not only interrupted my discourse, but all my best designs.

Frank, however, replied with a smile, "Not in the least, dearest lady! not in the least!" and as he spoke, he took her hand, and led her to her seat near the window, adding, "Our conversation will soon be over on important subjects. Harry, I can and will join Lord Norwich to-morrow, but it cannot be by eight o'clock."

"Then you may as well not join him at all, Frank," I answered, somewhat impatiently, as I saw new delays blighting all that I had accomplished. "Lord Goring's orders are, that the regiment be at Maidstone by eight, at latest, and they must be obeyed."

Lady Eleanor passed her hand twice across her eyes; and Frank replied, resuming at once the cold, stern tone he had been accustomed to use:

"That, sir, is my business. The regiment cannot be there by eight—no, nor by nine."

I was now convinced that all would again be lost, without some great effort to change his determination; and I made one, which nothing but the painful circumstances in which I was placed could justify—which nothing else could have induced me to attempt. Not that that measure was one of thought and calculation. On the contrary, it was one of impulse, the last resource of my mind, in despair of seeing a brother act as his duty, his honour, and his name required.

"Lady Eleanor Fleming," I said, advancing to the spot where that lady sat, with the tears clustered in her beautiful eyes, and scarcely withheld from running over, even by all woman's habitual command of her own feelings—"Lady Eleanor Fleming, mine is a hard task. I speak to my brother, who is as dear to me as ever brother was to brother;—I speak to him as advocate for his own honour, for his own duty.—Do not interrupt me, Frank, for pity's sake; for indeed I would interest a more persuasive voice than mine, to plead the same cause.—Lady, I bear him the direct orders of his commander-in-chief, to march his regiment a short and easy distance by a particular hour, in order to share in movements and efforts on which the

safety of the King and the realm depend, as the last stake which can be played for the crown of this country. Speak, lady, if, as I believe, you hold him dear; and urge him to the straightforward duty that lies before him. Speak, for the love of Heaven; for he is ruining himself, and casting away his honour as a soldier!"

No language can express the bright but beautiful colour that overspread her face, at an appeal which touched, perhaps too boldly, on feelings that I was supposed not to know; but it was my last hope of influencing my brother by gentle means; and, as far as engaging her voice also, I was successful—unexpectedly successful.

"Colonel Masterton," she said, with her cheeks still glowing, "I know not, I cannot imagine, that my voice should have such power as your brother supposes; but yet, as he has spoken boldly, I will not dissemble; and, as your interest and your honour *are* dear to me—most dear—for both their sakes I advise, I pray you, to obey the orders you have received."

While she spoke, she fixed her eyes full upon him; and her words flowed with rapid and energetic eloquence, while her cheeks, her neck, her brow, were all crimson with feeling and with consciousness; but the moment she ceased, she dropped her eyes to the ground—resumed her seat—the colour faded in her cheek—and instead of the eager fire which had but a moment before sparkled in her glance, the tears burst forth, and overflowed the long dark curtain of her eyes.

"Dear lady," replied Frank, in a soft but determined tone, "it must not, and it cannot be. I will be responsible to Lord Norwich for my own conduct. As for you, sir," he added, turning sternly towards me, "you have taken this day an unwarrantable liberty with me and with this lady; and though, like many other offences, I resent it not, because I am your brother, as your commanding officer, I will not have my commands disputed, or my will cavilled at. Go, sir, to the regiment. See that all be prepared to march at nine to-morrow.—Answer me not, sir! for I am at least colonel of the regiment, and will be obeyed."

"The liberty I took with that lady, Frank," I replied, "was solely through her persuasion—I may say, her noble and generous counsel, to save you from a far greater pain, that you must now suffer. You are not, as you suppose, colonel of this regiment; and, whether you will or not, it marches for Maidstone to-morrow, at five in the morning."

"How now, sir? You are mad!" exclaimed he, advancing towards me, with his eyes flashing as if they were full of lightnings. "You are surely become insane! and have lost what

little wit you ever possessed!—Or is this mere insubordinate insolence?" he added. "We will soon see whether I am, or am not, colonel of the regiment. Ho! without there." He called from the open window to the sentinel on the steps. "Order up a serjeant's guard with all speed. By Heaven, I will bear with it no longer!"

"You had better calm yourself, Frank Masterton," I replied; "the guard must be turned to other purposes than that for which you called it.—Yet, one word more, Frank: will you march to-morrow at five?"

"I will not!" he answered, striking his clenched hand upon the table.

"Well, then, sir," rejoined I, "from George Lord Goring, Earl of Norwich, you received your commission, and from George Lord Goring I bear you your supersedure; and, if you follow my advice, you will make the best of your way back to Devonshire; for, if you fall into the hands of the Roundheads, they will probably shoot you for active loyalty you have too little displayed; while, if you fall into those of Lord Goring, even a brother's intercession, I do not think, would save you from death, for treachery that you did not intend to practise."

Frank had turned deadly pale, while he gazed upon the copy of his supersedure which I handed to him; and I could see the struggle for firmness, which was long going on unsuccessfully in his bosom. At length, however, he mastered his emotion with a sneer. "This, sir, is, I suppose, the first fruits of your fraternal intercession," he said. "It is truly creditable to your heart."

"Oh, Frank!" cried Lady Eleanor, laying her hand tenderly upon his arm, "do not embitter your own feelings and your brother's by useless taunts. Go with him! go with him! in God's name! Do not I make a sacrifice?" she added, in a lower voice, whose tone was sunk, not for concealment apparently—for I could distinguish every word, but from deep feeling, and the consciousness of much that could not be forgotten. "Do I not sacrifice hope, and joy, and affection by that very counsel? Do I not give myself up to tears, and memory, and regret?"

"Ellen!" said my brother, pressing her hand in his, "it cannot be! I cannot, and I will not, be commanded by a boy—and that boy a brother who has wronged me."

"Indeed, indeed, Frank!" I replied, pained and softened by the deep agitation under which I saw him writhe—"Indeed, I have not wronged you; nor do I seek to command you, as you fancy: no, not for a moment. Look here! But promise me to march to-morrow at five, and I tear the supersedure at once, resume my place at the head of my troop, and serve under

your orders as before. This permission I extorted from Lord Goring, and it was granted as the reward of what I had done in that morning's skirmish. If you will march, the supersedure is at an end. Indeed, Frank, I act from affection, and not from rivalry or ambition."

As I spoke, I laid my hand on his, which was as cold as death. His first impulse was to snatch it hastily from me; but a moment after, he gave it me again, saying, in a tone of deep melancholy, "I believe you, Harry! I believe you, after all! I feel I have done you wrong. But it matters not—I am ruined and undone for ever! My honour and my character are lost, and must be lost! I cannot go!—Do not press me further; I cannot go. I know the risk and the consequences—but I cannot go. Take the command, Harry! go and gain honour and glory, and distinguish your name! Fate plays the game against *me*, and I must lose."

I tried to persuade him to better things. I used every argument, every motive, every reason, that I could devise. Lady Eleanor forgot all; and clung to his arm in tears, beseeching him to obey the orders he had received: but it was in vain. He grasped my hand firm in his. He pressed her to his bosom; and then turned to the door, repeating, "It cannot be! Where is my servant, I wonder?" he added, somewhat wildly—"where is my servant?"

"I am afraid, Frank," I said, following him towards the door—"I am afraid, that wherever that villain Gabriel is, it will become my duty to put him under arrest, as there is much reason to believe that he holds private correspondence with the rebels."

"Do not! do not, Harry!" exclaimed my brother, turning eagerly, and taking both my hands—"do not, if you love me—I would not for the world—for Heaven's sake do not! Grant me this boon at least, Harry Masterton," he added, imploringly. "Leave him with me. He is both a villain and a knave, capable of anything that is base or mean. A slave that I shall some day have cause to shoot through the head; but till that day comes, he must remain with me."

"Well!" I answered, seeing evidently that the fanatical villain had possessed himself of some of my brother's secrets, which gave him a dangerous power—"Well! be it as you would, Frank; and believe me—oh! believe me, that in all I have done, my first wish has been to shield your honour, and to promote your welfare."

He held my hand as if he were about to speak; but the words failed him; and turning away once more, he left the room.

Lady Eleanor still remained wiping the tears from her eyes. When she turned them towards me, the same bright flush came over her cheek, which, within the last two days, had been so familiar with her face; but I could not help thinking that I saw a degree of gladness there also, which one might very well reconcile, even with Frank's refusal to comply with her entreaties. It was impossible, indeed, to feel angry at her rejoicing that he stayed. She had done far more than I expected, in begging him to go. I felt that in some sort she had acted nobly; and but small allowance for human weakness was necessary to pardon the internal joy I was certain that she experienced at the prospect of his remaining by her side, even though his honour called on him to leave it.

I thought, however, that I could not with propriety remain in her house any longer; and, advancing towards the place where she sat, I proceeded to express my sense of the part she had taken in my discussion with my brother.

"I have to thank you most sincerely, madam," I said, "and my gratitude is not at all diminished from having been mingled in some degree with surprise. I acknowledge I did not expect you to second my efforts so zealously as you have done."

Her influence over my brother, and her feelings towards him, had been very little concealed during the whole dispute; but the allusion to it still agitated and confused her.

"You do not know, sir—oh, you little know, what a woman can do," she replied. "But I hope, Captain Masterton," she added hastily, as if willing to say no more on such a theme, "or rather, as I should now call you, Colonel Masterton——"

"Nay, lady," I interposed; "do not call me by that name. I have no intention of taking that title; and only lead the regiment to its duty as the second in command. I cannot but entertain a hope—a vain one, I am afraid—that some fortunate chance may still screen my poor brother from the consequences of his obstinacy. But what were you about to honour me by observing?"

"I was merely going to say," she replied, "that I hope you will not quit my poor dwelling to-night. Perhaps your brother may change his intentions,—perhaps he may be brought to yield. I see," she added, with a heightening colour—"I see how deep is your affection for him; I see all that you would willingly sacrifice for his welfare, and I love you for the love you bear him. Stay, then, Captain Masterton, stay, and once more join your efforts to mine. I will endeavour—indeed I will endeavour—to shake his determination."

"I have known him, Lady Eleanor," I replied, "for many years before you did; and I am convinced that his determina-

tion cannot be moved. I must now retire, to prepare the regiment for its march; but I will have the honour of waiting upon you before nightfall, both to take my leave, and to hear my brother's final resolution."

"Stay yet one moment, sir," she said, rising, and laying the long-rounded fingers of her beautiful hand upon my arm, with a look full of dignity and fire, though the blush was deeper than ever on her face and neck. "I am about to speak to you for myself and of myself. You have shown yourself in every act that I have seen you perform, and by every word that I have heard you speak, a gentleman and a man of honour. Tell me, then, what should such a person do, if a lady's fair fame and reputation were placed in his hands by her confidence in his courtesy, and her efforts to second his noble purpose?"

"Forget, as far as he can, madam," I replied; "and those things which memory *will* retain, should be for ever, *as if forgotten*."

"Then, sir, pledge me your honour," she said, earnestly, "that all which has fallen this day from my lips, or from those of your brother concerning me, shall be as you say—*as if forgotten*."

"I do, madam," I answered; "everything but your energetic endeavours to make him do his duty."

"You give me your promise?" she asked.

"Most solemnly!" I answered; and bowing over the hand she extended to me, I quitted the apartment and the house. The whole day was spent in making the necessary preparations for leaving the quarters we had occupied so much too long. As I now wished to detain Master Walter Dixon, without entering into any discussion with him, I did not visit the barn in which he was confined; but took care that he should be supplied with everything that was necessary to his comfort. The second messenger who had been despatched to Lord Norwich, and whose name, by the way, was Anthony Halt, had been less fortunate than William Fells, and had not returned at all. What became of him, I know not, for I never saw him after.

Notwithstanding the evil which our delay was likely to occasion to the royal cause, the regiment itself was recruited by its stay, both in numbers and in condition; and knowing the small force which Lord Goring commanded—small even after the junction of the other forces—I contemplated with pleasure the thoughts of leading him so strong and well-appointed a reinforcement.

Such feelings, nevertheless, did not make me at all the less anxious that Frank should be moved from his unhappy resolution, which I knew not whether to attribute to the mad passion

which had acquired such sway over his mind, to the obduracy of determination which he had always displayed, or to some circumstances unknown to myself. I was rather inclined to believe that the latter was, in a degree, the case, though I doubted not that his insane love for Lady Eleanor made him gladly seize anything which gave him an excuse for remaining near her.

The last effort, however, I was resolved to make; and accordingly returned to the mansion-house late in the evening. It is useless to relate all the particulars of my visit—the result was the same. Frank was still as immovable as marble, and though Lady Eleanor, drowned in tears, entreated him to go on the path of duty, he continued not only steady to his purpose, but seemed in some degree hurt at her again urging the request, saying that he should certainly stay, if she would extend her hospitality to him one night longer. It was all painful and all fruitless; and, feeling it to be so, I took my departure, leaving, at my brother's request, a guard of twenty men, in the stables belonging to the house. As I descended the avenue alone, I saw a dark figure cross a distant part of the lawn, and pausing in the moonlight, seem to fix a meditating gaze upon the house. I determined to approach it; but before I could take three steps beyond the shadow of the trees, it was gone; and I could discover no trace of it in the brief space of time that I could afford to the search.

CHAPTER XI.

OUR trumpets sounded to boot and saddle at four o'clock in the morning; and not long after, we began our march. The world was yet in all its young freshness, and there was a soothing sense of tranquillity in the whole scene, that spread calmly over the heart. The early red of the dawn was still upon a flight of little feathery clouds, that hung about the zenith; and the sky looked like the breast of some fairy bird, whose plumage was dappled of azure and pink and gold. The same rosy hue seemed melted in the very air; and as the slanting sunbeams poured more and more fully upon the world, every object that they touched caught the lustrous tint of morning, while the long blue shadows cast by the horizontal rays, contrasted, yet harmonized, with the light whose absence gave them existence. There was a sound of wakening through the air too: the matutinal birds, one by one, were bursting into song; and a distant

hum told that the busy world of insects had begun their daily labour and delight. The voice of thanksgiving for the bright gift of day seemed to rise from creation to the gates of heaven; and everything, from the diamond dew-drops clustered on the leaves of grass, to the effulgent sky under which they shone, appeared robed in splendour for the morning sacrifice.

The sound of our trumpets was harsh upon my ear; and with all youth's dreams of glory, I confess I would far rather have enjoyed that calm morning in the woods, or by the sea-side, or on the brow of some wide-looking hill—by myself, or with Emily Langleigh alone—than leading the brightest of mortal hosts to the more glorious of triumphant fields. Oh, how the pomp and the pageantry, the bustle and the display, were rebuked by the sublime glance of the early morning!

I could not but feel melancholy, as I gave the command to march; and the words, "God bless ye, cavaliers!" uttered by some loyal maiden, who stood to see us depart, with four or five other damsels who had risen with the sun for the same purpose, were the first thing that recalled to my mind the justice of the cause in which our swords were drawn, and reconciled me to the thoughts of war, under the reproving voice of the calm scene around.

I had waited for some time after the first trumpets had sounded, with the faint hope that their notes might awaken my brother from both his real and figurative sleep; but he came not, and we were obliged to begin our march. Still, every step I took, I became more and more anxious on his account. "What could I say to Lord Goring?" I asked myself. "What would be the inevitable consequences of the report I had to make?" It was sad and terrible to think of—the blasting of his own fame—the agony it would bring upon his father. The soldiers themselves were evidently already commenting upon the absence of their proper commander; and, as I rode back towards the rear, to see that the prisoner, Walter Dixon, was safely guarded, I heard the name of the colonel repeated more than once. Calling the captain of the second troop to me, a poor but honourable gentleman in our neighbourhood, I began to speak with him on the subject; and hinted, I am afraid rather insincerely, that business of a particular nature detained my brother behind us.

"Oh, yes, sir!" he replied, "we all know what the business is; but we almost thought—I beg your pardon for speaking so boldly—but we almost thought it was a pity you did not prevent him from fighting this duel, for the King's service surely should not be postponed to a private quarrel."

"A duel!" I said, musing, and taken somewhat by surprise. "How did it get abroad that he was going to fight a duel?"

"Why, sir," replied he, "I forgot you were away at the time; but yesterday hot words were seen to pass between the colonel and some gentleman in black, by one of the sentinels, in the avenue behind the house; and both laid their hands upon their swords; but some one coming up, they parted. The same person in black we suppose it was who came to the village some hours afterwards, and hired a man to carry a billet to the colonel. This got about in the regiment, and we never doubted that there was a duel toward, when we found that the colonel did not command us this morning."

These were tidings indeed; and tidings for which I would have given millions a few hours before. The story was not improbable, and many circumstances which I had remarked, confirmed it. I had myself beheld a stranger in the woods, habited as described in black. No quarrel, it is true, could have taken place between him and Frank after our meeting, but it might have done so before; and the note which I had seen put into my brother's hands, had appeared, from the manner in which he received it, to have been something interesting, though nothing unexpected. And yet I did not think that for any common affair of the kind, for a thing that might at any time be settled in ten minutes, Frank would neglect his duty to his King and to his own honour. But then again I remembered how deadly pale Lady Eleanor had turned when she beheld that stranger; and I doubted not that the quarrel had some reference to her. I concluded, indeed, without much proof, that he was in all probability some rejected lover, and the cause of contention, his pretensions to the lady, and I supposed that some peculiar circumstances, with which I was unacquainted, prevented its hostile discussion an hour or two earlier than the time proposed.

What was to be done, became the next consideration. Had I known before that such a meeting was in agitation, I should have scrupled at no means to compel Frank either to hurry it to a termination before our departure, or to postpone it to some future time. As I came to think farther, it struck me that even then, it was not too late; it wanted still a quarter to six o'clock, and we were within seven miles of Maidstone. My horse was as fresh as the daylight; and I had two led horses with the regiment, to mount me at the moment of need. In two hours and a quarter, I could surely ride twenty-two miles, and do a great deal of business besides. My resolution was instantly taken, and turning over the command to the senior captain, I

called out William Fells and another resolute fellow from the ranks, bade them follow me, and galloped back towards Penford-bourne as hard as I could go. The road was good, and the ground easy, and we flew over it like a passing cloud. In five-and-thirty minutes we reached the low park wall, at about a mile from the house; and I paused to consider whether my horse could clear it. As I did so, the clashing of swords struck my ear, and I was over in a moment; a turn round the copse wood brought me to the end of a broad green alley, about a hundred yards down which appeared four men, two of whom were deep in eager and desperate conflict, the others stood by, and at the coming of myself and my two followers, a sudden exclamation gave notice that the two lookers-on at least were aware of our approach. I dashed on, resolved at all risks to put a stop to the matter for the time, if for no longer; but before I could reach the spot, one of the combatants, in a rapid pass, lunged wide of his mark, reeled back, lost his balance, and fell. The other, followed by one of the two spectators, dashed into the wood, exclaiming, "Not enough yet; we must meet again!" and on arriving on the ground, I found Frank lying on the grass, and bleeding from two severe wounds which seemed to have been draining him of his heart's blood for long before he fell. A stream of gory drops towards the copse, told that his opponent had not passed unscathed; and Gabriel Jones, who had made the fourth of the party, was now busily and skilfully stanching his master's wounds.

"What do you do here, Harry?" exclaimed my brother, raising himself on his arm, as I rode up. "Get you gone, in God's name! I am but little hurt. That cursed faintness made me fall; but I am better now as I lie down. Get thee gone, Harry, to the regiment! I am little hurt, indeed."

"Verily, God be praised, what his honour says is true," added Gabriel. "By the special intervention of Providence, which never deserts those destined and elected to be vessels of grace, the sword of the unrighteous man has not touched any mortal part, and though he be faint even unto death, yet shall he do well."

I knew the rascal to be no bad surgeon, and therefore derived great consolation from his assurance, especially as Frank, even after having ceased to speak, motioned me to my horse again, and seemed anxious for my departure. No time indeed was to be lost; and after endeavouring as far as possible to ascertain the truth in regard to the injuries he had received; and having satisfied myself that they were only dangerous from the immense loss of blood he had sustained, I gave directions to one of the troopers to stay with Gabriel Jones, and convey

his wounded officer to the mansion-house. I then knelt by my brother's side, and whispered the assurance that I had merely taken the command of the regiment as his second, and that the matter of the supersedure was unknown to any but ourselves. His present circumstances, I added, would be a full excuse to Lord Goring for his absence from the regiment; and that I hoped to see him both better and happier when I returned, if ever that took place.

He pressed my hand affectionately, though faintly; and again motioned me to depart. I accordingly sprang upon my horse, and resumed with all speed the road towards Maidstone.

For some time I rode on with my reveries uninterrupted by any other sound than the clatter of my horse's feet: but in less than half-an-hour, the wind, which set strong in our faces, brought the report of artillery. Another and another dull heavy roar succeeded the first; and although I had given especial orders not to quit the walk at which the troops were proceeding when I left them, till I returned again, I feared lest they might hurry on at the sound, and, giving my horse the spur, never quitted the gallop till I came up with the rear of the regiment. The noise of the artillery was now incessant, and mounting a fresh horse, I put my men into a quick pace, and hurried forward towards the rendezvous, though the hour appointed had not yet arrived.

As I passed backwards and forwards, almost all the officers found an opportunity to ask concerning my brother: "Sadly wounded, but not dead," was my general answer; and I took occasion, as I rode a moment by each troop, to notice the animating voice of the cannon, and to speak of the strife to which we were fast approaching, as the thing that all brave men must most desire.

Both men and officers were all eager enough; and there was a slight degree of rivalry between the troop which had already gained some glory in the field, and those which had been left behind, which promised emulation—one of the best roads to great success.

The two miles which the regiment was distant from Maidstone, when I rejoined it, were passed as rapidly as possible; and I am afraid that more than one pannier full of eggs and chickens were overturned by the troopers, in their eagerness to advance, as they almost ran down a number of peasants and market-women, who were hastening away from the town, where hard blows were for the time the only marketable commodities. Nearer and nearer as we came, the scene of confusion became greater, the roar of the cannon more loud, but mingled and, as it were, supported by a thousand other sounds, which easily

directed the ear to the scene of strife. Just as we were about to turn out of the road, upon the little green where we had been directed to wait, something loud whistled past my head; and, at the same instant, as it seemed, a cannon-ball struck a young pollard elm tree in the hedge-row, and the upper part, with a tremendous crash, fell across the road before me. I was startled for a moment, I own; but, knowing the effect of trifles upon large bodies of men, I made a great effort to recover myself, and without, I believe, any pause, or perceptible change of demeanour, I leaped my horse over the fallen mass, and pursued my way. The troopers followed, most of them with a light laugh, and in a moment after we were on the green, before the little alehouse called the bush.

The scene of confusion, now before our eyes, was tremendous. Clouds of smoke were rolling over the green, from the slope of the hill beyond; on which, in dim and confused masses, we could see the forces of the Roundheads and the Cavaliers engaged in deadly strife. The ruinous effect of the cannon-balls was visible in all the houses round about; and over-turned carts, dead bodies, wounded men, abandoned arms, and plunderers already pillaging the dead, showed that the struggle had changed its scene, and had passed over the very spot where we stood.

It still wanted ten minutes of the hour which had been assigned for my arrival; but in such a case, it seemed to me that to stand idle waiting for orders, would be worse than acting on my own responsibility; but in the smoke and confusion, I could not ascertain whether the dark masses interposed between me and the hill were rebels or cavaliers.

Halting the men for a moment, I rode forward to the other side of the green, where it terminates at the summit of a steep bank, under which passes the high road, and which commanded a better view of the field. But it was in vain I did so; the smoke was so thick that I could only distinguish long rows of pikes, and dark columns of troops, bodies of cavalry whirling here and there, like flights of plovers, mingled altogether with the sudden flashes of artillery and musketry, and the occasional glance of a steel cap or cuirass. I could make nothing of it; and as I rode back towards the regiment, I was looking about amongst the wounded cavaliers, who were strewed here and there upon the green, for some one capable of giving me information as to which was the royal army; when a little boy, apparently not twelve years old, without hat, or shoes, or stockings, ran up to the side of my horse, and eyeing me attentively all the way, followed me to the head of my men. The moment,

however, that he saw me approach close to them, he said, in an inquiring tone, "Colonel Masterton?"

"Well, my little man," I said, surprised at hearing my own name, with my brother's rank attached to it. "What is it!"

"From the General!" he said, in the same laconic style, holding up to me a little bit of crumpled paper, in which I found written with a pencil,—

"We are forced to retreat before superior numbers. If possible, make a circuit through the skirts of the town, and charge the enemy's left flank, while I extricate my infantry. At all events, make a diversion by a charge, cut your way through, and join me."

"NORWICH."

"N. B. The boy will lead you!" was added below; and though such a guide seemed a very insecure trust for the safety of so many men, I had, of course, nothing to do but obey. "Can you bring me by some by-path to the left of the enemy's line, my man?" I demanded.

"Yes!" was all the reply, and off he set before me like a shot. I had hardly time to put the regiment in motion and follow, before he had made a circuit round the green, to a spot where a narrow lane led down amongst some dull houses at the back of the town. Seeing that our little conductor ran like the wind, I hurried our pace, and without a moment's pause for thought or reflection, he threaded half-a-dozen intricate turnings, at every break in which we could hear the voice of the battle roaring on our right hand. At last, he stopped at the entrance of a road which turned in that direction; and suddenly bounding up by my horse's side, as if to reach my ear, he said in a low, quick tone, "Now take care, you are upon them."

Almost as he spoke, I spurred forward and turned into the road. It seemed to have been but a cart-way, between two houses into the fields beyond, and was not altogether twenty yards long; so that, at once, the battle again broke upon my sight; but now much nearer than before, and with my position reversed in regard to the field. The wind here set from me, and blew the smoke away, so that I could distinguish plainly the objects that were in the foreground. The general plan of the field, however, and the positions of the two armies, I confess I neither saw nor understood.

A small park of artillery, which seemed extremely well served, and a considerable body of heavy horse left to guard it, were the first things that struck my sight; and the same glance informed me at once, by the plain, rude habiliments of the soldiers, that the horse I saw were Roundheads. They were placed a little higher on the ground than we were; and ap-

parently left for the specific purpose of defending the cannon. The troopers were sitting idle on their horses, gazing over the field, with the long line of their backs and of their horses' croups towards me. To charge them was of course my determination; and I brought up the regiment as fast as possible.

The first thing that made the rebels aware of our presence was, our forming about a hundred yards in their rear; and even then, more than one of them turned his head, and seemingly taking us for some of their own regiments, did not give the alarm. At length, a trooper, more observant than the rest, remarked our colours; and there was an immediate movement amongst them; but by this time we were ready to charge, and were upon them before they could properly wheel.

I saw a good deal of wavering and confusion along their line as we came up; and just as we were closing—when each man could distinguish his antagonist as perfectly as if they sat beside each other—when every feature, grim and tense, with the eagerness of attack and defence, was as clear as in a picture—the hearts of some of their troopers, shaken by surprise and disarray, failed; and they attempted to turn their bridles from the shock. Immense confusion ensued; and with a loud shout we poured into their broken ranks, cut down the artillery-men at their guns, and drove back the flying cavalry upon the pikemen of the left wing. Many of the rebels, however, stood manfully, in spite of the flight of their companions; and one little knot in the centre, refusing all quarter, were absolutely hewn from their saddles.

The effect of our charge, I afterwards found, had been great upon the fortunes of the day. The artillery of the enemy's left, which had thrown Lord Norwich's retreating infantry into confusion, being now silenced, order was restored in that part of his army; and at the same time, as the parliamentary pikemen were in many places trodden down by their own cavalry, an opportunity was afforded of rallying the royalist horse, to keep the enemy in check; while Lord Norwich concentrated his troops upon the road, and the retreat assumed a firm and regular order.

At first, after having gained the height, and caught a glance of the position of the various forces, I fancied that a few brisk charges, while the Roundheads were still in confusion, would have turned the day in our favour, as on the former occasion at Wrotham. But the whole business, as I soon found, was of a very different nature. The part of the parliamentary army which I saw was nothing but their left wing, which had been extended for the purpose of turning the right flank of the royalists, and intercepting their retreat. Lord Norwich had extended his

right to counteract this movement; but, in doing so, the superior numbers of the enemy, and the well directed fire of their artillery, had nearly effected the dispersion of his whole force; and our arrival in the rear of the rebels was only in time to save that wing of the royal army.

The confusion of their cavalry, and the capture of their artillery, was seen by the parliamentary generals, as soon as by the cavaliers: and while a small body of our friends came down to support me, a large mass of pikemen and a regiment of cavalry, began to rise over the slope, which concealed the main body of the Roundheads from my sight. Success gives boldness; and I was just about to charge them, notwithstanding the vast superiority of their numbers, when an officer rode up to me from Lord Goring.

"You are to bring in your regiment, sir, with all speed," he said, "in order to cover the retreat of the infantry."

"Where is Lord Goring?" I demanded.

"Yonder, sir!" was the reply. "Just beyond that cuckoldy regiment of London horse, to the left of those coming up the hill."

"Then my shortest way will be through them," I replied.

"The shortest way, sir, but the roughest, perhaps," answered the officer, with somewhat of a sneer, which would have sent me through them if they had been a legion of fiends, instead of a regiment of London burghers.

"You had better keep away to the left, young gentleman; and so over the rise, without meddling with them."

"Take through the hollow way, and you will be upon them before they see you," said a small voice near me; and looking down, I saw, to my surprise, the little guide who had brought me Lord Goring's first commands. It was evident that he was right in his counsel. A way cut through the soil to some lime-pits intersected a great part of the field; and as the Londoners were making a retrograde movement, they would probably be in the very act of crossing it, at the moment I arrived in their neighbourhood. The poor boy who pointed it out, however, could not pass without some notice; and throwing him some money, I bade him get off the field as fast as he could.

"I have been in more battles than ever you were," replied the boy; "but bid some one take me up, and I will show you the way."

He was mounted in a moment, behind one of the troopers; and, betaking ourselves to the hollow way, we followed the lime-road, till it again opened out upon the field. To my no small consternation, however, when we were again upon level ground, I found the London burghers as I expected, it is true,

between me and Lord Goring; but my path had been marked, and the body of horse and pikemen which had been sent to reinforce the left wing, was now wheeling on my flank, within a hundred and fifty yards of me.

The situation was critical; but a moment's pause would have been ruin. The only hope was, to cut through the Londoners before the others could come up, and ordering the trumpeters to sound a charge, we dashed in amongst them. They were taken by surprise: their line was extended, and shallow; ours was narrow and deep; and our whole purpose being, to force our passage, we poured our squadrons at once upon their centre, and cleared ourselves a way by the very impetus of our course. Not that the citizens fought amiss. Not a man attempted to turn his bridle, as they had done in the first regiment we attacked; and I do believe, that the two troops with which we came in contact, were annihilated where they stood—a great part cut down, and many trodden under the horses' feet. Nor did we ourselves suffer a little; for we afterwards found, that nearly a hundred men had fallen in our ranks, during the brief moment which was required to cut our way through. I was slightly wounded myself in the face, and in the arm; but not so much so as to disable me in any degree; and we continued the same rapid pace with which we had advanced, till we reached the foot of the hill from which Lord Goring was directing the efforts of the cavalry that remained upon the field. The last companies of infantry were now retreating easily along the high road; and the firing had ceased on both parts. But dense masses of the parliamentary horse were seen coming up in all directions; and it seemed evident, that we should still have a very severe and difficult task to effect our retreat before so superior an enemy.

Leaving the regiment at the foot of the hill, I rode up to the General, who instantly welcomed me in the midst of all the orders he was giving. "Welcome, welcome, and a thousand thanks, Colonel Masterton!" he exclaimed.—"So your brother would not come?" he added, in a lower voice.

"He is desperately wounded, my lord—" I replied; but he would not suffer me to finish my sentence, exclaiming, "I am glad of it! I am glad of it! Better be killed, sir, in a noble field like this, than throwing away his honour in sloth and inactivity. You have yourself done nobly;—but there is no time for long thanks. We must be now drawing off after the infantry. Fairfax thinks he has won a battle, but I can tell him, with six thousand men, half raw recruits, to effect our retreat in such order before twenty thousand, is worth three better victories than ever he gained."

The movements of the enemy were by this time slackening in activity; and drawing off the regiments of cavalry one by one, Lord Goring continued his retreat with comparative ease. The enemy's horse continued to follow us, it is true; and twice I received orders to face about and charge them; but before noon we could hear their trumpets of recall, sounding in all directions; and it became evident that the parliamentary generals had abandoned the pursuit.

As soon as it was judged advisable to halt, I proceeded to inspect the regiment as carefully as possible; and in ascertaining our loss, which had been very severe, I found that the prisoner, Walter Dixon, had contrived to effect his escape, in the hurry and confusion of the events through which we had just passed. To tell the truth, I was not particularly sorry to get rid of him, now that our junction with Lord Goring had taken place; but, at the same time, we had gained an addition to the regiment, for the little boy who had guided us so well, had remained sticking close to the back of the trooper who had taken him up, and seemed quite contented with his quarters. What to do with him embarrassed me a good deal, but I reserved that question for future consideration; and, with the usual fate of all things delayed, it met with a thousand new postponements, till accident took the affair into its own hands.*

CHAPTER XII.

It is always a sad review, the inspection of a regiment after a battle, even when the men gone were but little known to their officers; the number of familiar faces lost to his eye, the silence of voices whose tone has been heard a thousand times answering the roll-call; and many a little circumstance by which the dead are linked to memory, must render it a melancholy task. But in those instances where the regiment has been raised almost entirely from the tenantry or the neighbours of the person who commands it, where each face is familiar as his brother's, and where there are multitudes of common interests, memories, and affections between his own bosom and that of every man he leads to the field, it is scarcely possible to tell how painful is the examination which exhibits so many lost. These feelings

* A somewhat different account of these transactions is given by Lord Clarendon, but the passage in which he speaks of this encounter is so brief as to leave all the minor details in doubt; nor, indeed, could his relation be taken in preference to that of an eye-witness.

of personal and individual concern for every man under my command, made me perhaps hurry to the investigation, before any of the officers of other regiments thought fit to proceed to the task. I found many missing, and amongst the rest, the saddle of poor William Fells was vacant.

I had scarcely concluded, when I was called to Lord Goring, and hastened instantly to obey the summons. I was directed by the corporal who brought the command, to a small inn with the sign of a bull's head painted in deep crimson over the door; and entering the passage, I made my way through a crowd of persons, some civil, some military, that were hanging about, with countenances in which both fatigue and anxiety were very manifest. At a small, rickety, unpainted deal door, whose thin and shapeless form but little impeded the sound of the discussion which was going on within from reaching the ears of those without, stood a sentinel, with musket in hand and match lighted, and with that appearance of stolid deafness in his countenance, which it behoves all sentinels near thin doors and angry debates to assume. Whom he was stationed to keep out, and whom to admit, Heaven knows; but he made no difficulty in permitting me to enter; and in a moment after, I was in the presence of about twenty, or five and twenty gentlemen, who seemed to be doing their best to forget the gifts of their station and education, in the fury of discussion.

One—a florid burly squire, with no very military air or courtly demeanour—was standing up at the side of the table, round which the rest were seated, roaring away a heap of unconnected and hesitating sentences, with a face fiery between the anger of opposition and the consciousness of talking nonsense. At a little distance sat a more tranquil person, tearing to pieces a very good pen which he had gathered from an inkstand in the midst. He was not interrupting the other, it is true; but he was muttering to himself from time to time, loud enough to be heard by every one but the speaker,—“That’s false! You’re an idiot! Blundering ass!” and various other courteous ejaculations of the same nature.

Three more gentlemanly men on the other side of the table, appeared, with their heads close together, conversing in a whisper, without attending to any one else; while Lord Norwich was sitting at the head of the room with a roll of letters and other papers under his hand. His countenance was full of anger and vexation; and from time to time a scornful smile curled his lip while the other was speaking, which certainly did not improve the declaimer’s oratory, or calm the passion by which he was evidently affected.

“So!” thought I, as I entered, “this is a council of war. is

it? It wants but little, it would seem, to become a field of battle."

So absurd, indeed, was the whole scene, to a person whose passions had not been worked up to the same pitch, that I could have laughed, notwithstanding all the sorrowful details which I had been lately examining, had I not been restrained by the expression of deep anxiety and vexation which I beheld in some of the finer and nobler countenances around me.

"You may sneer, my lord! you may sneer!" said the burly orator, just as I was entering, "but I'll tell you what—it does not at all signify—the gentlemen of Kent, I say—the gentlemen of Kent will not be thrown away in this manner. Why, did not I now, and my brother—did not we join the King's army willingly, with all the force we could make? and did not I tell you, if you would march then, half the country would join you as you went? and did not you listen to Edward Hales there, instead of to me? and have we not now lost half our men and more?"

"Not by the course I pursued, sir!" replied Lord Norwich. "Had I listened to your advice, we should not have lost half, but the whole. However, sir, to end this matter at once, I am, I believe, commander-in-chief for his majesty, and in his majesty's name I have to tell you that, with thanks for your service, we do not want volunteers to command us; we want men to fight, sir, and not to dictate."

"Fight, sir! And have I not fought?" demanded the other, in the same outrageous tone. "Have not all my men fought? Did not my poor brother fight?—ay, sir! did he not fight till he dropped at this cursed Maidstone? and did I not see him, when last I saw him in life, waving his hand, and crying, Long live King Charles?—ay, when he was down beneath the horses' feet!"

"You had better dismiss the council, my lord," said one of the gentlemen on the General's right hand. "This is turning out ill."

Lord Norwich took his advice; and cutting across the person who was speaking, he said, with a grave and melancholy expression, "I am deeply grieved for your brother, Sir Charles, and deeply grieved for the loss of your fine body of tenantry: but I hope that matters may not be so bad—your brother may only be wounded. In the meantime," he continued, seeing the other about to break in upon him, "in the meantime, I will consider what every one has said—especially what you have said, Sir Charles; and in an hour or two, when we are all calmer, I may, perhaps, again call for your advice. At present, I think it will be better for you all to go and refresh yourselves, and I will

receive the reports of our numbers, and confer with you hereafter, gentlemen."

So saying, he rose, and his example was followed by the rest. Before they took their departure, however, the members of the council, if so it could be called, broke up into two or three groups, and conversed in these separate parties for some time. Lord Norwich himself spoke quickly and eagerly, in the recess of the window, with the two gentlemen who had sat next to him; and the last words which were uttered by one of his advisers were, "Most decidedly, my lord. It is a step that, depend upon it, is now inevitable, and the sooner it is taken, the greater chance of safety to all concerned."

"Well—well," replied Lord Norwich, slowly, "be it so! Now, gentlemen," he added, turning to the others, "by your leave, I will receive the reports from the regiments."

The whole party, with the exception of the two who had been speaking with the commander-in-chief, took the hint he gave, and withdrew. I was about to follow, with another officer, who, like myself, had not sat down at the council board; but Lord Norwich made us a sign to remain. After watching the rest out, he walked forward, and closed the door; and then made two or three slow turns in the room, with the letters which he still held in his hand clasped with an intensity which bespoke more mental emotion than he chose to appear upon his countenance. At length, he resumed his seat at the head of the table; and, calling the two who seemed his most confidential friends, to his side, he begged us all to be seated. After thinking deeply for a few minutes, he turned to me, and the other officer who had entered the room nearly at the same moment as myself; and to him Lord Goring first addressed himself. "Sir John Powel," he said, "your regiment, though one of the most gallant in the service, appears to have suffered less to-day than usual. Have you any guess how many men you can muster?"

"About seven hundred, my lord," replied the other; but it is only a guess. However, certainly not less than six hundred and fifty."

"And you, Colonel Harry Masterton," rejoined the Commander-in-chief, "what number, think you, can you bring into the field—effective men, I mean?"

"Certainly not more than three hundred and fifty, my lord," I replied, "if you do not mean me to include the badly wounded."

"Good God!" exclaimed Goring. "They have thinned us indeed. I did not think I saw so many of your saddles empty, sir?"

"There are not so many killed, as there are so badly

wounded as not to be fit to sit their horses," I answered. "I have just gone over the roll, my lord, and I am certain of my accuracy."

"I do not doubt it, sir," replied the General: "I do not doubt it. Retire, gentlemen, for a moment, but do not quit the door."

"Sir John Powel and I immediately obeyed, and were recalled almost as soon; when my companion was dismissed with commands simply to inspect his regiment, and take every care that the horses were supplied with forage, and the men with food. I remained longer, and received orders to march, towards nightfall, upon a little hamlet which I had passed between Penford-bourne and Maidstone, taking with me a regiment of newly-raised foot. The enemy, Lord Goring explained to me, had established there an out-post, and it was the object of the Royalists to conceal their farther march, and make the Roundheads believe that they were endeavouring to force their way once more towards London.

"The worst part of the story is now to be told you, Colonel Masterton," the General added. "You will attack the out-post, and no doubt immediately make yourself master of the hamlet; but after you have done so, you may march on in what direction you please."

So sudden and so strange an announcement forced from my lips the exclamation of "Good God!" But Lord Norwich proceeded without noticing my surprise.

"The regiment of foot which I send with you will, beyond all question, disperse before morning; at least, if it follow the plan that all our regiments here are doing; for not a night passes but we lose three or four hundred men. The case, sir, I am sorry to say, is quite hopeless. Had all the friends who promised to join me brought up their forces as I was marching on London, the King, sir, would have been at this moment upon his throne; but now I must abandon Kent, where the Royalists, as you may judge from the scene you have just witnessed, are more difficult to rule than the Roundheads are to beat. I must then make the best of my way towards Essex, and can only hope to cover my retreat by deceiving the enemy. Do as much as you can, therefore, to magnify the appearance of your forces. Extend your line; keep your trumpets sounding; send a troop round to the other side of the hamlet; kill as many of the cuckoldy scum as you can, but take no prisoners, lest, by escaping afterwards, they betray your real numbers. Neither must you halt longer at the hamlet, than just to refresh yourselves. Then, if you take my advice, you will retire into the fields, and disperse your foot; for if a hundred or two do stay with you,

they will only embarrass you. After that you can either try to join me in Essex, if you hear that we are there having any success; or endeavour to reach Wales, and fight it out with the Cavaliers in the mountains; or force your way back to Devonshire, and keep quiet till a more favourable moment."

It appeared to me that his lordship spoke very coolly of our probable fate. But I could pardon him, as his own, if he fell into the hands of the Roundheads, was likely to be worse. As the line of march laid down for me towards the enemy's outpost was across the country, I ventured to ask for a guide; upon which the commander demanded, with no small animation, what had become of the little messenger he had sent me in the morning?"

"He is with the regiment now, my lord," I replied: "can he serve to guide me to-night?"

"He can guide you to any part of the country," answered Lord Goring. "But if you carry him with you, Colonel Masterton, you must give me your word of honour that you will take such care of him as if he were the child of a dear friend. His father, sir, was as true a cavalier as ever drew his sword. Many a flagon have we emptied together, and in many a hard field did he fight. This boy, sir, was born and bred in the midst of scenes that break one into dangers and difficulties early; and in many a battle has he sat upon a baggage-wagon before he could well walk, clapping his little hands at the braying of the trumpets and the roar of the artillery. When he was five years old, I have seen him running amongst the ranks, where the shot was flying like hail, or mounted on the pommel of his father's saddle, heading the charge against pike and gun. He never forgets either place or person that he has once seen; he never forgets a word that he has once heard; he never misunderstands what you mean, and every inch of Kent and Sussex he knows as well as a geographer. His father was killed about a year ago, and I lost sight of the poor lad; but he came upon me suddenly at Maidstone, all in rags, and I vowed I would never let him quit me again. But, God help me! 'tis not the first vow I have broken; but he will be safer with you than with me. We used to call him Little Ball-o'-fire. But his true name is John Marston Hall."

I willingly promised to be kind to the dead soldier's boy, as far as circumstances would permit me to be kind to any one; and then, having been forced to drink a cup of strong waters, which had been circulating pretty liberally amongst Lord Goring's council on their first arrival, I took my leave and returned to the regiment. I discovered little Ball-o'-fire in the midst of the troopers, questioning them, with short sharp inter-

rogatories, which I found, by a casual word or two, referred to myself. The account given by the soldiers was, apparently, not very unfavourable; for when I asked the boy if he would go with me, he looked up, with his bright black eyes glistening with eagerness, and replied, "Yes—over the world."

Unhappily, by this time there was many a vacant saddle in our ranks; and many a poor fellow whom, it was evident, I should be forced to leave behind, to follow as they could when their wounds were whole again. There was no difficulty, therefore, in mounting poor little Ball-o'-fire; but the care of my wounded men took me up till it was nearly time to depart. I succeeded, however, in getting them carried out of the line of high road, and distributed among some cottagers, who, for a trifling gratification, undertook to guard and take care of them; and although this was but frail security for their comfort and protection, I could do nothing better, and was forced to leave them, after having added as much as I could to their purses from my own little store.

When all this was done, the regiment numbered about three hundred and forty-seven effective men, and about forty more who could sit their horses, but were unfit for any active duty.

Our corps, however, was singular in one respect. Having come a length of way, and being all united in one community of feelings and remembrances, there was not one man had deserted; while the rest of Lord Goring's forces—either entirely levied or principally recruited in Kent—were spreading over the country by hundreds; and, indeed, as he proceeded on his retreat through the native places of his soldiers, the march of his army was like the progress of a carrier, who drops a part of his charge at every village by which he passes.

At the hour appointed, everything was prepared to set out; and having ascertained in person that the Commander-in-chief had no farther orders to lay upon me, I took my final leave, and gave the word to march.

Nothing of any consequence occurred during our progress. We arrived at the hamlet just at that dim moment of the night when the sun has quite set, and before the moon has risen, so that we were upon the out-post of the rebels before they were aware. Seeing little or no object in destroying the handful of men which the place contained, I endeavoured to restrict our efforts to making a great show, and a great deal of noise, without spilling much blood. But the soldiers, especially the foot, were savage with the events of the morning, and the loss of their companions, and, in despite of orders and entreaties, they gave no quarter. Some one also, either accidentally or intentionally, set fire to the hamlet; and a cruel piece of useless bar-

barity remains generally attributed to me, which I would have given my right hand to have prevented. But such, I am afraid, is our general fate, either in good or bad. The things we strive with our whole strength to accomplish, bring us no renown; and we, nine times out of ten, owe our fame or our infamy either to a trifle, an accident, or a misunderstanding.

The effect of our attack, nevertheless, was such as Lord Goring desired; and was perhaps more than he had expected. The fugitives from the burning hamlet magnified our strength, and for two days afterwards, it was generally believed in the Parliamentary army, that the whole Royalist force had pushed past their right; and much anxiety was entertained for the result.

In the meanwhile, Lord Goring, with his companions, effected their passage into Essex; and after a time, threw themselves into Colchester, on the memorable siege of which place I need not pause.

From the flames of the burning hamlet I drew off the forces with all speed; and crossing the fields, following the courses of the brooks and streams, and practising a thousand other manœuvres to conceal our line of retreat, I at length brought my men safely to a spot about six miles south-west from Maidstone. There I communicated to the remnant of a regiment of foot, which had accompanied me, the commands of Lord Goring; and though I heard a good deal of grumbling and profane swearing, I believe from my heart there was not a man in the ranks that was not very well contented with the order to disperse. Nay, more: I do not believe that there would have been one of them with me by the following morning. The next consideration became, how I might best effect my retreat with the cavalry to Penford-bourne, the direction of which I had by this time very nearly lost. Here, however, little Ball-o'-fire proved of no small service by his counsels.

"You will soon have the moon," he said, when he heard my difficulty; "and she must rise nearly behind the old castle. Till then, follow that star, and whichever way the road winds, turn back to the star again; by which, at all events, we shall be getting nearer."

The character Lord Goring had given him made me trust much more implicitly to his advice than his age seemed to warrant; and I did not find myself deceived. There were one or two dull clouds upon the edge of the sky, which cut off whatever portion of the evening light still lingered, at that period of the summer, about the line of the horizon; but in a short time those clouds began to be tinged with red as from a fire, and I felt some alarm lest any part of the enemy's force should have

been detached in that direction ; but, a few minutes after, some lines of silver mingled with the red on the edges of the vapours, and then the round disk of the summer moon, looking fiery and large through the horizontal mist, came forth above the clouds. The moment she did so, the whole scene was clear. The castle, with the rocks and woods amongst which it stood, rose in dark masses a little to the right of the beautiful orb, whose beams, pouring over the large old trees in the park at Penford-bourne, came gently down the valley through which we were advancing, picking out with bright light, a thousand marks to guide us on our onward progress.

"Oh, but that's a nice old castle!" cried my little guide, who now rode by my side, mounted on an immense trooper's horse, which he managed like a giant. "Oh, but that is a nice old castle! I know places in it would conceal a thousand men."

"Indeed!" exclaimed I, remembering all that had passed when I last visited it. "Indeed! Whereabouts, my boy?"

"I cannot tell; but I can show," replied the boy; "and I would not like even to show without occasion."

"We may have occasion but too soon, for aught I know," replied I: "and besides, John Marston, I may have many reasons for wishing to know."

"Call me Ball-o'-fire," answered the boy, "if you love me, gallant sir, and I will show you all the places with my whole heart; but it is a pity that all the world should know of a place which has hid many a brave and honest man, and may hide many another."

"It has hid many a rogue, little Ball-o'-fire," I rejoined, "and of that I have had good proof. But, however, with it for our landmark we shall soon reach Penford-bourne."

"Ay, and the fair Lady Eleanor Fleming," said the boy: "she was kind to me, two or three years since, and patted my head, and looked gentle at me; but her dark husband, Sir Andrew Fleming, frowned like a thundercloud all the time I was there."

"And how long has Sir Andrew Fleming been dead, my boy?" I demanded.

"Is he dead?" asked the boy, with some tokens of surprise. "They said he was jealous of her; and that they parted, never to see each other again; but he did not die; and he went across the sea with Monsieur du Tillet, who had once been as badly wived, I've heard my father say, as Sir Andrew himself."

"And why do you say he was badly wived, little Ball-o'-fire?" I demanded again, anxious to get all the information on this subject I could, as we marched on. "Perhaps it was his own fault he was unhappy."

"Still he was badly wived!" replied the boy. "If I were to mingle honey and salt, would you not say it was ill mixed? He was as stern as a piece of artillery; and she was as light and as gay as a twinkling lark: and that was the reason I have heard them say that she hated him as much as he loved her: and love and hate in one house, you know, are like gunpowder and ball in a cannon,—the one is sure to drive the other out of window.—But, oh, he is not dead;—no, no, he cannot be dead. I heard of his being alive the other day."

"Pray God he be!" I mentally exclaimed; for I felt quite certain at that time, that Frank knew not of his existence; and I calculated strongly on that piece of news ending at once the mad and hopeless passion with which he was possessed.

Various and unconnected were the meditations to which the boy's words gave rise in my mind. Frank had himself told me that Lady Eleanor Fleming was a widow; and although I had heard the speakers at the old castle allude to the husband of the lady of whom they spoke, I had nearly forgotten the circumstance. As soon as I became convinced that the one I had imagined to be Gabriel Jones was in fact not the saintly personage, I had some doubts, I had some fears indeed, that my brother's attachment had gone so far as to leave deep and painful impressions behind; but I knew the principles in which he had been educated, and I was not afraid that he would continue to nourish feelings such as those which he now experienced, when he learned that they were not only hopeless, but criminal. I felt sure that, on the belief of Lady Eleanor's perfect freedom from all ties, Frank had encouraged a passion, which, however likely to meet with the most decided opposition from his father, was pure and honourable. Her conduct had not a similar excuse; and I now concluded that much of the agitation and anxiety which her manner had so often betrayed, had arisen in the consciousness of that fatal secret which must blast for ever the hopes she was encouraging in my brother. I trusted, also, that indignation at having been deceived might do something to deliver Frank from his thralldom; and I resolved to state the matter boldly to him, and rely on his better angel to make him willingly accompany the regiment in its retreat to Devonshire.

At all events, I saw that if he remained, he remained to destruction in every sense; and I was determined to use means, perhaps unjustifiable under any other circumstances, to force him from a situation so perilous to himself. Then came remembrance of the severe wounds he had received; and the chance of his not being able to sit his horse, mingled with various wild speculations on the cause of the duel in which he had been

engaged. But, before I could give all these whirling thoughts a tangible form, and regular order, we were challenged by the sentry at the gates of the park, and once more halted our horses on the green at Penford-bourne.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALTHOUGH every consideration which ever in this world urged men to speed, now followed our footsteps to impel us rapidly on our course, yet by this time the horses were so much fatigued, that to proceed was out of the question: and, obliged to pause for a day at Penford-bourne, I took what care I could to provide for the refreshment of the troopers and their chargers; and, casting myself down in the cottage which had first received us there, yielded to pure weariness and fell asleep.

Scarcely two hours' repose was allowed me, when I was awakened, according to my previous orders, at five o'clock. Leaving the regiment, still to take what rest it could, I rose, and walked up towards the mansion, the servants of which were generally early risers. I found the doors open, and one of the lackeys was showing me into the withdrawing-room, when we were met by Lady Eleanor herself, in such guise as led me to imagine that she had not pressed her pillow during the whole night. A faint exclamation of pleased surprise, and a look of joy, that could not be mistaken, annihilated the cold and unfriendly feelings which had been gathering towards her in my bosom, and I could not believe that she was acting towards my brother on any systematic principle of evil; but chose rather to think that, carried away, like himself, by strong and irresistible passion, she saw not—she would not see, the guilt of nourishing it, and the greater guilt to which it tended.

So I judged of her; and whether I judged right or wrong—as I knew that it would be difficult to remove Frank from her dwelling, now that his duty no longer called him to the field, and now that his wounds gave him a fair excuse for lingering behind—I resolved in the first place to strive for her co-operation; and as the means of gaining it, to show her, if I could, that however strong she might feel in her own innocence, how great soever she might believe her own powers of resistance to be, the very encouragement of such a passion was criminal in itself, and but too sure, in the end, to undermine every virtuous principle.

The task, however, was one, of course, of difficulty and delicacy, which my youth and inexperience were scarcely qualified to attempt; and I paused long in considering how to begin. Holding the hand she had given me at our first meeting, I led her into the withdrawing-room, and closed the door, but still kept silence, every moment of which seemed but to increase my difficulty.

At length, after gazing at me anxiously for some minutes, she spoke herself. "I am afraid to ask," she said, in a low, fearful voice, "the occasion of your speedy return. Your silence speaks but too plainly."

"The King's cause, madam," I replied, "is lost, at least in Kent. The numbers of the rebels have prevailed against honour and loyalty; and, after a severe struggle at Maidstone, yesterday morning, Lord Goring was again forced to retreat, though not without glory, for he repelled, during several hours, the fourfold force of the rebels; and then marched from the field in order and good array."

"'Tis bad news, indeed," said Lady Eleanor, "but, thank God, you have returned yourself, though, as I see, wounded. We have been very anxious for you here, ever since we heard the cannon yesterday. Your brother tells me," she continued, in a timid and faltering voice, "that he has seen you since the misfortunes of yesterday morning."

"He has, lady," I replied. "As soon as I heard the likelihood of such an event, I returned, in order to prevent it; but returned too late. For him, now, is my great anxiety. How he is to be removed to Devonshire, which must be done with all speed, is a matter of no small difficulty."

"Removed, Captain Masterton!" she exclaimed. "Impossible! You know not the state of weakness to which the loss of blood has reduced him."

"To leave him here, Lady Eleanor," I rejoined, "would be leading him with my own hand to the scaffold. The Round-heads will be here, probably, before two days are over; and do not suppose that they will be very careful in their mode of removing him to the Tower, where the block and axe will be as certainly his doom, as they would be mine, if I were caught by the rebels."

"But I have interest amongst the parliamentary people," she replied, anxiously. "Essex was my cousin; Sir William Waller was my father's dear friend. I have other interest besides—great interest!"

"If, lady, you can take upon yourself the responsibility of insuring my brother's life and liberty," I replied; "if you have the power to command his safety——"

"No, no, no!" she exclaimed, "I dare not risk it. I think I could; but if I were to fail, I should never forgive my boldness; death itself," she added, passionately, "could not wipe out the memory of having devoted him to such a fate. Take him rather, sir—take him with you, whatever it may cost. Yet, stay! there is still a way. Could he not be concealed here till he is more fit to journey? You do not know that there is a private passage from the cellars of this house to the old castle on the hill. A chamber might easily be fitted up, where I could tend him myself, and where he might remain hidden from every other eye."

"I am afraid, lady," I replied, now seeing at once that Gabriel Jones might very well have been the speaker on the hill after all, and have returned by the passage to which she alluded—"I am afraid that the secret communications of that old castle are known to many other persons besides yourself. Might I suggest also," I added, "that your ladyship's husband might not perhaps——"

The blood rushed up to her face like fire, and suddenly covering her eyes with one hand, she held forth the other towards me, as if imploring me to stop. The first agitated movement had broken through my sentence; but I felt now, that the time was come for me to say what I had intended, if ever; and entirely altering my tone to one of the utmost gentleness, and taking the fair hand she had extended with the purpose of staying me, I proceeded.

"Listen to me, dear lady," I said. "Far be it from me to wish, for one moment, to hurt your feelings, or to pain your heart. You cannot suppose, Lady Eleanor, that any young man of gentle breeding can see so fair and amiable a creature as you are, with the desire of wounding her for a moment. Believe me, then, when I say that I feel every interest in your happiness; and the more, from the deep regard I see you have for my brother. But, lady, I cannot but feel also, that, for your welfare as well as for his safety, his speedy removal from this place is absolutely necessary. You cannot become his wife; and though I doubt not that you believe you could ever remain his devoted, kind, and affectionate friend; nay, that you could love him more deeply than anything else on earth, without becoming criminal; believe me, lady, that such a state is somewhat more than dangerous. It can but end in the destruction of both."

While I spoke, through the fingers of the hand which remained firmly clasped over her eyes, the tear-drops rolled like rain; and the agony she seemed to endure was terrible. At length she rose, and still turning away her head, "Stop, sir!" she

said, "Stop! Your motive doubtless is good; but you take somewhat too great an advantage of my situation. Speak with your brother yourself; try to persuade him to go with you. If he refuse, I will see him, and endeavour to use such arguments as may most effectually move him. And now, sir," she added, dashing the tears from her eyes, and turning round upon me with a glance of beautiful indignation—"And now, sir, having wiped those unworthy drops away, I will beg you to leave me. Your brother sleeps, but I can tell you, for I have watched the night by his couch, that he has enjoyed uninterrupted slumber; and, therefore, if you think fit to wake him, do. Should you find your reasoning vain, as I said before, have recourse to me, and fear not I will do my part. Though let me tell you, Captain Masterton, that had I felt sure of being able to protect him, or to insure his life myself from the Parliamentarians, no weak doubt of either myself or him would have made me yield him to a long journey, after such wounds as he has met with."

She bowed, and signed me to the door, with an air of majestic command, which I felt no disposition to disobey; and retiring from the withdrawing-room, I proceeded to the apartments of my brother.

On entering the dressing-room, I found Gabriel Jones, as usual, with the Bible on his knee, and apparently deeply busied in reading the Holy Scriptures; from which employment, however—as I knew that he grossly perverted, in his own foul mind, the pure words of everlasting truth that he there found written—I did not scruple to disturb him. In answer to my inquiries after my brother, he informed me that none of his wounds were at all dangerous; and that though he was very weak, through loss of blood, when he had fallen asleep the night before, there was little doubt that he would wake much stronger, from the long and tranquil repose which he had enjoyed. On inquiring still farther concerning the possibility of removing him, I found, to my surprise, that the valet was not at all unwilling to second my efforts in regard to the journey of his master. There was nothing, he said, to prevent his travelling. Men, much worse, had been carried longer journeys; and in a litter, he would answer for it, that all would go well.

As Frank continued to sleep, I went down to the gate, and gave orders for preparing a machine with all speed, for carrying the object of our care with as little motion as possible; and on my return, I found him just awake.

Our conversation was long, and he was much softened in character by the languor of his frame; but all I had to tell him made little impression in regard to his journey, and his determination to remain, though expressed in a weaker voice, was

couched in terms as firm as ever. Lady Eleanor then became my only resource; and though she received me on my return with the same air of cold displeasure which she had assumed before we last parted, she instantly rose to fulfil the promise she had given.

"You will have the kindness to wait for me here, Captain Masterton," she said. "On my return, I hope to bring you such tidings as you desire—your brother's servant is with him, I suppose?"

I replied that he was; and she left the room. For near an hour I remained in expectation of her return; but at length I was sent for to my brother's chamber, where I found Lady Eleanor sitting at a little distance from his bedside, and Gabriel Jones standing by. Fresh tears had evidently overflowed the lady's eyes, and my brother's countenance was flushed and agitated.

He did not speak himself, but left Lady Eleanor to communicate to me, that he would no farther oppose the measures I thought necessary for his safety. As it was improbable, however, that the Parliamentary generals would immediately detach any considerable part of their forces in the direction of Penford-bourne, we determined not to set out till the cool of the evening; and during the course of the day, both Lady Eleanor and Frank recovered greatly their composure; although from the moment I had mentioned her husband's name, a degree of coldness, I might say haughty reserve, had come over the lady's manner towards me, which did not at all wear away during the day.

At the appointed hour, the litter we had prepared was brought to the door; and Frank was carried down and placed safely in it. A feeling that the last words which could ever pass between my brother and the fair being in whose bosom he had inspired such deep interest, must be spoken then, made me draw a little away, and also, on some excuse, send the guard down the avenue, as Lady Eleanor approached to bid him farewell. She had by this time gained perfect command over herself, and she spoke to him for some minutes without a tear dimming her eye, without a trace of agitation appearing on her countenance. At length, seeing her raise her head, I again approached, and as I did so, Frank repeated, in a hasty voice, "Then I rely on you! You will not—surely you will not fail me!"

"By all I hold dear on earth, and beyond the earth!" she replied, in a low, thrilling tone, and drawing back, she bowed slightly to me as I came up, and ascended the steps into the house. She was very pale, but seemed perfectly composed;

and she walked steadfastly onward into her dwelling, without once turning her head. I thought I heard a heavy sob, as she passed the door; but if it were so, that was the only thing which marked emotions that were far more powerful, I felt sure, than those she suffered to appear.

The horses were now placed to the litter, as had been arranged; and, at the end of the avenue, I put myself at the head of the regiment, and we began our march. The first day's journey was a painful one: Frank never opened his lips to me, though he spoke several times to Gabriel Jones; and it seemed that he attributed to me all the necessary pain he felt at leaving a person he so dearly loved. I had made up my mind, however, to bear all that the peevishness of sickness and the anger of disappointment could produce; and I relaxed not a moment in endeavouring to soothe and console him, by every means in my power. The journey he bore even better than I had expected; and when we halted, he forced himself to thank me for the pains I had bestowed upon his comfort. The night passed well, and nothing occurred to give us either disturbance or apprehension. No enemy appeared to be in the neighbourhood, and the people were, in general, loyal; though one saintly preacher, whom I met in the streets of the little village where we halted, called me "a rusty hinge and a creaking door."

Frank passed the night quietly; no fever resulted from his wounds; and in the morning he was much stronger than the day before. His mind seemed more reconciled to his situation also; and he did not appear to view me with the same cold dissatisfaction which the whole of his conduct, during the previous day, had displayed. Before we began our morning's march, he spoke long with me on the events at Maidstone; and the assurance that the circumstance of his supersedure still remained locked in my own bosom appeared to afford him infinite relief.

From this time, as we advanced on our way towards Devonshire, I was almost constantly by the side of his litter, till his strength was sufficiently recovered to permit of his mounting his horse; and he felt deeply, I am sure, all that I did to relieve and solace him. Even after he had quitted the litter, however, as he could not bear any extraordinary fatigue, the command of the regiment remained with me for several days; and during that time, various difficulties and obstacles obstructed our progress. An occasional rencontre with different bodies of the militia, served to keep our parties in constant activity; and in more than one large town, our advance was threatened with interruption by multitudes of the inhabitants, who collected to call us "Malignant dogs, hungering after the Saints, to devour them."

Our reception, indeed, was very different at the several places through which we passed. In some we were hooted, and even pelted, by the mob; and in others we were welcomed with joy, supplied with all we could want, and suffered to depart with God's benison. But on the whole, our passage through the country was more favourable than perhaps we had a right to hope for; and in almost all cases, where the magistrates or other civil authorities showed any disposition to impede our movements, I found that they were in general soon brought to reason by being informed, that we were retreating quietly, for the purpose of dispersing ourselves in our own homes; that if suffered to pass unopposed, we would injure no one; but that, being resolute men, we would cut our way through at all risks, on the slightest show of resistance. Nor, indeed, could they have attempted to stop us with any prospect of success, for a great many circumstances combined to leave the country nearly open for our march. One large body of the Parliamentary forces were still pursuing Lord Goring and the rest, in Kent. A second was directing its march towards Essex; a third, under Cromwell, was advancing to meet the Duke of Hamilton and Sir Marmaduke Langdale, in Lancashire; and at the same time, troops were necessarily left for the defence of London, as well as for completing in Wales what Cromwell had by this time begun by the reduction of Pembroke Castle. Thus, I do not believe that in any county through which we passed, five hundred men could have been collected to oppose us, at less than a week's notice. Our retreat, therefore, I may almost say, was uninterrupted; and long before the knowledge of our passage had spread through the country, we had nearly reached the place to which our movements tended.

Frank had by this time recovered his strength; and with pleasure I resigned to him, on the borders of Devonshire, the command of the regiment. Gradually, as his health was restored, his mind had seemed to recover its tone; but still he was silent, absent, grave. On approaching his home, all his old feelings and habits appeared to return. The same reserve, the same calm self-possession, was resumed; and, though I could see a change—though I perceived and knew that the fire which had been lighted up in his heart was anything but really extinguished; yet I do not think the most attentive observer, who had not watched him as I had watched, would have known any difference between the cavalier who had quitted Devonshire two months before, and him who now returned.

Towards me, indeed, there was a decided alteration in some respects. He was as reserved as ever; he never mentioned a thousand subjects that busily employed the memory of each,

every hour of our existence; he never told me his thoughts, his feelings, his plans for the future; but he was softer in his manner; evinced more deference for my opinion; and would often mingle his conversation with some kind and endearing word, that went sweetly home to my heart, and won all its best sympathies for him.

Such was the state of affairs when a messenger, whom we had despatched to Masterton House, returned with a letter from my father, containing directions to disperse the regiment, and let the troopers return home to their houses with as little parade as possible. He informed my brother, to whom the letter was addressed, that he had already entered into an understanding with the parliamentary commissioners, who were at Exeter, that on the disbanding of all forces, no farther notice should be taken of the part we had acted, than the infliction of a small and almost nominal fine. He, at the same time, sent us letters of safe conduct for our own security in traversing the country, and directed us to limit our escort to twenty men, as he had bound himself not to receive more into Masterton House. His word was so habitually considered law, by my brother and myself, that even had not the terms he had negotiated been half so favourable, we should have submitted without hesitation; and, accordingly, selecting the twenty men whom we thought best qualified to accompany us, we informed the rest of the troopers of what had been done, and dismissed them, well satisfied, to their homes, giving them security for the discharge of their pay, under our own hands.

We thought it best to do this at night, at a little village on the confines of Somerset and Devonshire; and I could not help feeling a strange sensation of regret, as troop by troop of men with whom I had taken so much pains; whose comfort and security had been for weeks and months a matter of so much interest to me; who had shared with me so many fatigues, and accompanied me through some perils, passed before my eyes for the last time. I turned away somewhat sick at heart, for it was one of those moments, when a thousand hopes and anticipations, blasted for ever, rise suddenly from the void of the irreversible past, like the mournful spectres of the loved and dead, that crowd into some dark and painful dream, and seem to presage new woes and sorrows for the time to come.

Most of the soldiers waited for nothing but leave to depart; and before next morning we were left with but few besides the twenty whom we had selected for our escort. Those, whose cooler spirits had chosen to remain, we sent by different roads, and selecting for our own journey the least frequented path that we knew, we traversed our native county, towards our home.

As we proceeded, the world of our early remembrances grew upon us. A total interruption of all old accustomed thoughts had taken place during our wanderings; but now every furlong of the road had its memory; and there was not a tree, or a rock, or a stream, or a hill, that did not recal the soft days of youth, and the things that never return. The very breeze seemed full of early days; and cloud after cloud, as the summer air drove them across the blue heavens, looked like the phantoms of all my young dreams, hurried far across the expanse of life by the wild uncertain breath of fortune. Perhaps it might be some fitful caprice of my nature, or perhaps disappointment at the ill success of our expedition; but there was a deep gloom came over me, to which every step seemed but to add; and all the memorials of my early years excited only a sigh.

My brother, also, was grave; but by this time he had recovered fully, as I have said, his former self; and, within the last two days, even I had not been able to distinguish whether the passion which had for a time so stirred his soul, was really passing away to the world of bright things forgotten; or whether it was only that he mastered its expression. If it were the latter, he enacted his part most wonderfully well; and as if he strove to try his own powers over himself, he more than once mentioned Penford-bourne, and Lady Eleanor Fleming, as things almost indifferent. The first time he did so, I thought I could detect, by a quiver of the lip, that all was not quite calm within; but the second, and the third time, his countenance betrayed no emotion.

I felt discontented at his calmness. Why, I did not know. I had been the person to strive to withdraw him from temptation. I, it had been, who had warned him to beware of the criminal passion which he had encouraged, to beseech him to cast it off, and to tear him almost forcibly from its object. My endeavours had been successful. He had quitted the dangerous neighbourhood—he had recovered his serenity—he seemed to have thrown away, or forgotten, the feelings which had betrayed him: and yet I was not contented. No! not though his demeanour towards myself was gentler, kinder, more affectionate.

I could not account for my own sensations; and I would not, or I dared not, look closely into my own heart; but one of those trifles—which are in some sort the lightning flashes of our dark nature, showing us in one moment of bright light, all the dim objects that fill, unseen, the world of the human breast—was destined soon to blaze it all upon my sight.

My father met us, on horseback, at the gates of the park, near a mile from the house; and received us with a tenderness

and affection which he had never displayed before. He gazed anxiously on my brother's worn and thoughtful countenance; remarked the two deep gashes on my brow and cheek; and pressing us alternately to his bosom, gave free course to a father's feelings, for the first time for twenty years. We turned to the house on foot, followed by our little escort. I was absent and agitated; and my father noticed it; but added, that it was not extraordinary I should be so, on returning to my early home, after passing through scenes of such danger and anxiety.

As we came near the house, the sound of trampling horses, and many voices, gave notice of our approach; and the whole household issued forth to welcome us back. Emily Langleigh, lovelier than ever, was first on the terrace to greet us. Her eye turned towards me; but Frank stepped forward to receive the welcome of his promised bride, and pressed his lips upon her cheek.

Good God! what was it that I felt? It passed through my heart and my brain like lightning! it was madness! madness itself! but it mastered all other feelings. Common sense, reflection, everything was at an end; and dashing past every one, I entered the house, rushed up stairs to my own bedchamber, locked the door with violent haste, and cast myself upon my bed, in prostrate misery.

I have passed through a long life; I have known many sorrows and many cares, but I never felt, or saw, or dreamed of, anything that equalled the agony of that moment.

CHAPTER XIV.

THAT we, creatures of dust and ashes, should dream of happiness—should hope for unmixed enjoyment! 'Tis a madness!—'tis a folly! The very perfections of our corporeal frame render us but the more susceptible to bodily pain; and the refined essence of our other being, which commands, but cannot govern our clay, raises us above all the insects of the earth, chiefly by the fearful supremacy of mental agony—and yet the mind may do much, if properly exerted. It cannot remove the evil, but it can teach us to bear it: it cannot assuage the pang, but it can enable us to suppress its expression. If it be the noblest effort of the reflecting soul to conquer the passions of the animal, and even the finer yearnings of the heart, to compel ourselves to do our duty in despite of opposing circumstances and our

own desires, surely the triumph can never be complete when the victor over himself writhes under his own conquest.

Such were the reflections that grew out of my grief, after an hour's indulgence had exhausted its first violence; and the resolutions which I took at that moment, and which I adhered to long, with unshaken perseverance, were such as those reflections might naturally inspire: to conquer and to command myself; to see my hopes torn from me—not without a pang, but without a murmur; and by neither word nor action to betray to any one the agony of spirit under which I laboured.

I had at length learned what were my real feelings towards Emily Langleigh. I had at length discovered how—and how deeply I loved her. But while I made the discovery, I felt the double pang of knowing that she could never be mine; and that she was destined to wed a man who could not value her as she ought to be valued—who could not feel towards her the only affection that ought to make woman happy. Frank, I was sure, could not but admire the young and blossoming charms of her person; he could not but esteem the sweet and gentle nature of her heart; he could not but respect the fine and powerful qualities of her mind; but he could not love her as I could love—and I felt that nothing less ought to be her lot. Had I believed that the same intense and ardent feelings could exist within his bosom which existed within mine, I could have yielded her—not without a sigh, not without bitter everlasting regret—but with less pain. But to dream of her wedding a man who loved another, was misery indeed; and yet, that man was my brother, and I was bound to silence. His passion for Lady Eleanor, however open and undisguised it had been to me, was in the guardianship of my honour, and my lips were sealed by every duty:—I resolved therefore to suffer.

It were almost useless to inquire how or why I had remained so blind to what was passing in my own bosom, in regard to that dear, beautiful girl, during all the time of our early familiarity, and during all the efforts I had made to detach my brother from another pursuit. I had been taught from our first acquaintance to consider her as destined to him: nor had I well known what love is. In my endeavours, too, to win my brother from his passion for another woman, my mind had been too much engaged in the cause of his honour and his happiness to remember myself, or to connect what I was then doing, except very remotely, with the idea of Emily Langleigh. I did not forget, indeed, that at some distant period she was to be his wife; but it was a contemplation far off and indistinct; something that remained upon my mind more as a matter of habit

than of active memory or thought. But in those scenes at Penford-bourne, I had learned to know what love really is. I had seen it in its most fiery and most overpowering form; and it wanted but an impulse to make me apply the key which I had there acquired, to read the passion in my own heart. I had never seen Frank kiss the cheek of Emily Langleigh in my life before; and now, when he did so at his return, it passed like fire along my veins, and the secret of my own feelings was spoken to me at once.

And now, too, I felt that I had to resign it all; for to me, the future communion with that dear and beloved being must be ever mingled with bitterness: the *spes animi credula mutui* must be at an end; and, like the awful warning written above the Persian's throne, to keep in his mind that death was the end of all his glory, the words *she can never be mine* were destined to sadden each moment that I passed beside her. The long, dreamy conversations; the wild enthusiastic rambles; the pauses on the hill to mark the beauty of the scene, and to pour the rapturous overflowings of our young feelings into each other's hearts; or the morning spent by the sea-side, enjoying the repose of the summer air, and the murmur of the soft unwinded waves, and creating for ourselves an atmosphere of visionary happiness, must now, if ever indulged in, be, on my part, full of the miserable knowledge that the sweet companion who gave sunshine to the world of my existence, could never, never be mine!—that she was destined to be the bride of another:—that the common competition which was allowed to the meanest hind, was denied to me:—that I must yield her without striving, and love her without hope.

Oh! how truly yet in some instances, even in ordinary life, does the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, betoken the loss of happiness. Had I never known that I loved her—had that conviction never flashed across my mind, I might still have been happy—I might still have enjoyed to the full all the pleasures that could honourably have been mine—and only learned to be wretched at last. But now I felt that continual sorrow must follow my steps, and that a drop of poison was mingled for me with the cup of life, pervading it all from the brim to the very dregs.

My determination, however, was to drink it off without a shudder; and when that determination was once formed, I paused but a few minutes to collect my thoughts, and prepare for the task. Aware of the powerful nature of example, but wanting knowledge of the world to yield me those tangible and living types which might have afforded me a better strength than my own, I strove to place before my eyes some model for

imitation from what I had read. I called up to my mind the ancient philosophers of Greece ; I thought of Socrates and his bowl of hemlock ; I pondered a moment on the Stoic, and a moment on the Platonic philosophy ; and out of both I worked up a sort of system for my future conduct. There was in it a degree both of the puerile weakness of a schoolboy and the visionary strength of an enthusiast ; but yet, as I paused and pondered upon the firm and unshrinking nature of the great of other days, I found a new vigour spring up in my heart — a power of commanding my own emotions, which I had sadly wanted before. I remained a few moments longer to think calmly over my fate, and to let my resolution fix itself by the contemplation of the greatest evils that could ultimately befall me ; and then, unlocking my door, I went down to the common apartment where the whole family usually met. They were now all assembled there ; and when I came in, all their eyes turned upon me.

“ I can easily understand, my dear Harry,” said my father, kindly, “ that your return to your home and your native place, after so many scenes of danger and difficulty, must agitate you greatly ; but, really, you ought not to give way to such sudden bursts of feeling. Here is the Lady Emily has been not a little anxious for you. You should learn to command yourself.”

“ I have been tutoring myself to do so, my lord,” I replied ; and advanced towards Emily, to take the hand she held out towards me. The eye of my brother Frank rested on me as I did so, with a calm, satisfied, but peculiar expression, which made me almost fancy that he saw into my bosom. From my manner, however, I do not think he could detect anything ; for I strove strongly—and, I think, successfully—to cover the feelings of which I had become so lately aware, under precisely the same manner which had before concealed them from everybody, while they had been hidden from myself. Nevertheless, there was something of agitation in Emily herself, which I dared not scrutinize, for fear of shaking all the resolution I had built up. I saw her colour come and go ; I saw her eye look brightly up, and then fall ; and, after a few words of kindly greeting, I turned away.

It was a relief to me when my father began to speak of the various incidents of our short campaign, and to ask, in his brief, generalizing manner, the particulars of those events which tended to the greatest political results. Not so, however, to my brother, who with some precipitation answered Lord Master-ton’s first inquiries, by telling him that he had been wounded in such a manner, and at such a period, as to be obliged to leave me to command the regiment during the more important

events of the enterprise. He reddened while he spoke; but this piece of insincerity passed current; and my father, after asking the nature of his wounds, without inquiring where or how they had been received, proceeded to speak with me upon the conduct of the regiment in battle, and all the circumstances in which I had been placed.

I told my tale as well as I could; and related the incidents of the rising in Kent, more as a youth recounting his first exploits, than either officer or politician. My own feelings I dwelt upon, and all the objects as they had struck me, during the new scenes through which I had passed; but I am afraid I left my father the trouble of drawing all his own conclusions in regard to the consequences of the events which I narrated. There was one person, however, whom my history seemed to interest deeply, for, as I spoke, Emily drew nearer and nearer; and though she kept her eyes upon her embroidery, I could see that she was listening to every word, by the varying colour in her soft cheek, which changed from pale to red, and then to pale again, like a light cloud as it comes near and passes by the evening sun. My father was particularly struck with my account of little Ball-o'-fire, and ordered him to be brought in, that he might see him. While the servant charged to fetch him was gone to the stable, where the boy had already quartered himself, my brother left the room; and fortunate it was that he did so. The servant was absent only a few minutes, during which time Lord Masterton drew from me all the little I knew concerning the state of parties, and the political movements in the counties near the metropolis; and, at the end of that period, the soldier's child was brought in, clothed nearly as I had first seen him; for I had not yet had time to make any great addition to his very scanty wardrobe.

After asking several questions, to which the boy replied with the keen brevity which he had learned in scenes of haste and danger, and with a degree of irreverent boldness, to which Lord Masterton was not very much accustomed, my father demanded, "Well, little Ball-o'-fire, are you of gentle birth?"

"As gentle as the King," replied the boy, "and as hungry as the Prince of Wales."

"That may well be hungry enough, poor boy," replied my father. "But we must feed you, at all events, and clothe you too, I think. Would you like to be page to my eldest son, little Ball-o'-fire?"

"I would rather be lackey to his younger brother," replied the boy, boldly; and Emily, looking up, fixed her eyes upon him, with a surprised and inquiring glance, while my father demanded—

“Why so, my lad?”

What the boy might have answered I do not know; but he was the most rapid catcher of a glance I ever beheld; and after turning his eye for a single instant to my face, which was frowning pretty severely, I own, he replied—

“Because I know Captain Harry best; and because I saw him send his sword through the black-hearted Roundhead that shot my father at Bolton le Moors.”

Something in the boy's answer made Emily's eyes fill with tears; and my father seemed struck with it also.

“Ha! those are good reasons, in truth,” replied he; “and he shall make his page of thee till better times. Send for the village tailor, Harry, and get rid of those rags of his, that he may not shame thy service.”

“Those rags have not shamed the service of the King,” replied the boy, quickly, with a sharp and perhaps indignant tone. “Yet, nevertheless,” he added, a moment after, “they are old friends that I am not loth to part with, for they are every hour threatening to deny me their good company the next.”

As my father was not in general fond of such free-spoken companions, I took little Ball-o'-fire out of the room; and, after giving him strict directions in regard to his behaviour towards both my brother and Lord Masterton, I delivered him over into the hands of one of the servants, who, aided and abetted by the tailor of the neighbouring village, in a few days produced him in a page's dress, as handsome a boy as ever I beheld. There was an air of bold freedom and of dauntless courage in his whole demeanour, that might have become a prince; and though he strictly followed my commands, to show reverence and respect to both my father and brother, he still retained the air of easy independence that had grown up with him from his earliest years. His activity of body and mind was astonishing. He slept little, and that at any accidental hour that he found most convenient; but I never knew him absent when I wanted him, inattentive to my commands, forgetful of what he heard, or incompetent to execute anything that was asked of him. Of course I need not say that I did not demand anything very unreasonable, though sometimes, to try all the manifold strange accomplishments which he had acquired in his wandering existence, I would occasionally require him to perform offices very different from those with which he might have been expected to be familiar, and yet I never found any that his skill and ingenuity did not contrive to accomplish. On all occasions he showed himself gay, and shrewd, and good-humoured, but somewhat hasty in temper; and I would not have suffered him to wear a dagger, which he always did, had I not been aware that

he had been accustomed to the use of such an implement from his youth.

The quick movements, and the rapidity of speech and manner of the soldier's child, seemed, in some degree, to enliven the dull routine of our dwelling ; but, in other respects, everything soon appeared to sink back to the state in which it was before our unsuccessful expedition ; although several circumstances contributed to render the house more gloomy than formerly. My own feelings had changed me from a gay and lively youth to a grave and rather churlish young man. My brother, too, was more by himself than ever, and my father full as much so ; while every day some of the widows or orphans, or parents of the men who had fallen beside us in battle, would come up to the house, either for tidings of their relative's fate, or some account of his death, or some consolation under their afflictions. It was in general Master Harry that was asked for on these sad occasions ; and such interviews did not tend to remove the gloom that had fallen over me.

Emily Langleigh, however, was all that was kind and gentle. It formed no part of my plan to shun her society, or to endeavour to forget my love by flying from its object. I strove so to conduct myself, that, towards her, the slightest shade of difference should not be apparent ; but she saw that I was sad ; and, with but too dangerous kindness, she endeavoured to win me from myself, by every endearing attention. We were almost always together. Frank was seldom if ever near ; and, indeed, when he by chance met us walking or riding, he seemed purposely to avoid joining us, so that my days passed in that commune, which did far more to nourish my affection, than all its hopelessness could do to diminish it.

Thus passed more than two months, during which time my brother's conduct remained unaltered ; reserved, silent, constantly alone, riding, shooting, walking by himself, he seemed to hold little communication with any one but his servant Gabriel Jones. Nevertheless, if chance ever threw us together for any length of time, I found that he was gentler and kinder in his mood towards me than formerly ; and I could not but remark that often he fixed his eyes upon me, as if there was something in his bosom that he wished to speak. Once, and only once, he spoke to me of Emily Langleigh, in terms of such high and ardent praise, that, feeling I could hear no more, I left the room. He followed me to the door, and I heard his voice pronounce my name, as I was proceeding along the passage ; but I knew that the command over myself which I had striven so powerfully and so painfully to obtain, was, for the time at least, lost : and I affected not to hear his call. I have regretted through the long course

of many years that I did not pause at that moment, and listen to what he was about to say. It was but a trifle, it is true, but trifles are the pivots on which turn all the vast wheels of that complicated machine, society; and he who has no trifles to regret, will probably find, on memory, few great errors for which to compound with remorse.

With that single exception, nothing occurred during those two months to recal to my mind the fearful memory that Emily was to be his; and I began to grow accustomed to my fate.

At length, one day, as I returned from sailing in my boat on the bay, I met Frank suddenly in the wood. He caught my hand the moment we met, and, fixing his dark eyes upon me, with a look that seemed destined to read my very soul, he said, "Harry, my father has just announced to me that this day month ——"

Before he ended the sentence I knew what was to come. His gaze was upon me—his suspicions, I saw, were excited. But I nerved myself with all my strength, and by the time he had concluded—"that this day month I am to receive the hand of Emily Langleigh," I had obtained the power to reply calmly, with the single word, "Well!"

He held my hand a moment longer in his; and his eye ran over every line in my face, till I could feel the blood beginning to rise into it, in spite of all my efforts. But at that instant he loosened his hold, and, echoing my word "Well!" turned into the wood and disappeared. He said not a word—he made not a comment—but he echoed that word, *Well*, in a tone in which astonishment, and indignation, and grief had all their share.

My calmness was but of a moment. Nor could I have commanded that moment, had I not, in my solitary sail across the bay, been raising up and combating the same evil spirits that my brother's communication was calculated to call forth again. I had thought of Emily Langleigh as his bride—of my own dear, beautiful Emily as the wife of my brother; and though not a word had reached my ear to indicate that the time at which that sacrifice was to be made was now approaching, a strange, indistinct, painful apprehension that such was the case, had weighed upon my mind during the whole day. While it was but apprehension, however, I had dared to meet and to steel myself against the worst. But oh! what pure, unmingled agony of spirit were my communings with myself after the forebodings were confirmed—when I found that it was decided—that the day was named to put the inevitable barrier of fate between me and Emily for ever!

I sought out the deepest part of the wood—I cast myself

down in despair—I writhed amidst the dewy grass, like a crushed worm, for nearly two long hours, and was only roused at length from the tumultuous dream of my agony, by the approach of a footstep. I started up, but not before the quick eye of my new page had fallen upon me.

“Well, boy!” I exclaimed, in somewhat of a hasty tone, “what brings you now?”

“Nothing, but to tell the news,” replied the page.

“Tell it to some one else, then,” I said; “I know it well already.”

“She is a gallant sloop,” replied the boy, without appearing to take any note of the agitation which I felt must have been evident to the blindest eyes—“She is a gallant sloop, and half her cargo is by this time stowed amongst the rocks.”

“What do you mean, wild lad?” I asked. “What sloop are you speaking of?”

“The smuggling French sloop that lies so well at anchor in the cove,” replied the page; then suddenly changing his tone, and coming nearer me, he said, “How well she would carry us all to France!”

“Carry us all! Whom do you mean?” I asked. “You are mad, boy!”

“Not so mad as many!” he answered: “I mean you, and me, and one person more;” and he gazed up in my face with a glance which, translated by the feelings that were then newly wakened in my bosom, received but one interpretation.

He touched upon a dangerous subject; and, without another word, either of the questions which my heart prompted me to put, or of the rebuke that his boldness well merited, I turned, and walked towards the house. A child, a very child, had seen into my heart. Could I then dream that what I felt had escaped the keen eyes of my brother? The boy followed me as I walked on; but my own consciousness made a coward of me; and, without daring to question him farther, I bade him begone and play.

I shall never forget the meeting of our family at supper that night. What I said, I hardly know—what I felt was torture. Emily was as pale as death. In one single day the bright and beautiful colour of her cheek had faded entirely away; and, when she smiled, or rather strove to smile, it was like one of those faint and fitful beams that sometimes struggle through a stormy day, tipping for a moment some distant cloud; but lost again in gloom, long ere it reaches the earth. Frank was as silent as the tomb; and our meeting was rather like that of a family after the recent loss of one of its members, than on any more joyful occasion. A stranger coming amongst us then

might well have looked round to see if he could behold some vacant seat—some of those new, dark blanks in the domestic circle which—when death has lately been busy in a house, and time has not yet robbed memory of her sting—call up so many thoughts at every time of meeting.

My father saw that embarrassment, at least, hung over us all; and before he retired for the night, he told Emily that he had sent an invitation to her father's first cousin, the Lady Margaret Langleigh, to spend the ensuing month at Masterton House. The motive and the proposal were kind and judicious. Rightly judging that under such circumstances the presence and support of an elder person of her own sex would be of the greatest comfort to Emily, he had fixed upon one whom none of the family had ever seen, indeed, but of whom every report was favourable.

Her husband had fallen in the civil war; his estates had been sequestered. She herself had once suffered severe imprisonment; but fame said that she had borne all with exemplary patience, fortitude, and cheerfulness; and lived in penury with the same unchangeable serenity which she had displayed in her highest fortune. To Emily's mother she had been a dear and valued friend; and in Emily herself, she had ever taken a profound and unvarying interest. I found afterwards that, in prosperity or adversity alike, she had continued to demand and receive news of her young cousin; and though, at that time, I had hardly ever heard of her before, she had never ceased, since the death of Lord Langleigh, to correspond with my father. Such a person was well calculated to give confidence, hope, and support to us all; and, in truth, we all seemed to need it; but had she been the exact reverse of what she was, none of Lord Masterton's family would have presumed to differ from his opinion or murmur at his will.

For the next ten nights, it seemed as if the balmy angel of sleep had forgotten me for ever. During the day, a thousand eyes were upon me; but that part of existence generally devoted to sleep was my own—unwatched, unrestrained; and I lay and deluged my pillow with tears—bitter, weak, infant-like tears. But after acting all day, with the iron rigidity of a stoic, the part of calm contentment while my heart was on fire, it was a relief at night to be a very child; and to humour my grief to the overflowing. Still the want of rest, and the continual agonizing struggle in my bosom, had nearly, I believe, upset my reason. I formed, before I could conquer my own thoughts, a thousand wild schemes for carrying off Emily Langleigh. The words which the boy had casually spoken, wandered continually through my mind; and I more than once went down to

the smuggling vessel, spoke with the skipper, and ascertained that a small sum of money would bribe him to more deeds than I should be ever tempted to require. Let me not be misunderstood. I never in my waking consciousness formed or suffered such a thought. I banished them whenever I discovered such imaginations rising up in my brain. But I felt like him of old—as if I had two spirits; and while the better angel slept, the more watchful demon would lure me on with wild visions, towards deeds that the nobler soul condemned as soon as anything called it from its momentary slumber.

And what made me dream that Emily would consent to fly with me? it may be asked. I do not well know; and yet it was a dream that haunted me. Her fading cheek, her dimmed eye, which spoke of sleepless nights, too, like my own, a sort of shrinking from the attentions which my brother now began to pay, even an anxious and trembling agitation when I was with her alone—all made me feel that her heart was not in that which was going forward, and dream that perhaps her wishes were not unallied to mine. And yet to think so, only added torture to what I felt already. It was madness—it drove me to madness—and one day, when the conviction had come more strongly upon me than ever, in a fit of wild despair, I ran hastily down the narrow and labyrinth-like path that led to the cove where the smuggler lay, and in a few minutes I had hired the sloop to be at my command for the next thirty days.

It wanted now five days of that appointed for my brother's marriage; and, with a sort of gloomy determination in every step, which bordered on insanity, I trod back my way towards the house, murmuring to myself broken fragments of what I purposed to say to Emily, in communication of my love and my design. When I entered the withdrawing-room, however, I found her seated beside an old, but still beautiful woman, though her beauty was like that of a ruin—something lovely, falling fast to decay. There were the lines of exquisite features; the broad high forehead, the straight nose, the small mouth, the rounded chin, the long blue eye; and even the fine complexion remained. But the snowy hair braided across the brow, beneath the close wimple, and the deep marks which time and care can only furrow, spoke of both age and sorrow.

Emily had been in tears; whether at the tale which Lady Margaret—for it was she—was telling, or at her own feelings, I do not know; but after my introduction to her, the lady went on, and spoke of woes so endured, temptation so resisted, and agonies so subdued, by the one chastening principle of true piety, that I felt ashamed of my own madness, and began to look to some higher source than that from which I had hitherto

endeavoured to draw false strength to master the expression of my feelings.

She spoke in a gentle and a soothing tone of herself and her sorrows—in a manner which gave consolation without seeming to console, and with such topics, she mingled many a truth gathered by long experience in the world, which told the better, as they bore evidently the stamp of the place whence they came. “Religion,” she ended by saying, “was the only thing she had found on earth which, like the bee, drew from the bitter and the sweet the same honied juice; and though many ways had been devised for man to govern his nature, she had seen but that one principle which ever could raise him above it.”

Emily listened, and then lifted her eyes to mine, with a look that seemed almost of entreaty. I had listened too; and turning to my own chamber, I knelt and prayed, and cast from me at once the unworthy designs I had entertained. I was not happier, it is true, but I was better; and I felt that I had acquired a new principle of endurance.

Still, as the ship was hired, I resolved to detain it there, to see Emily’s hand placed in that of her husband, and then, without a moment’s delay amidst scenes that I dared not trust my mind to dwell on, to seek in secret some other land, and give myself to the wide current of accident. It was a wild and rash purpose, it is true; but those were days in which every kind of mad scheme was so familiar to the mind, that it was nothing extraordinary.

The skipper, then, remained in the cove; his merchandise was already dispersed over the country; and the magistrates had too much occupation, between fanatical dreams and political disturbances, to notice with energy his illicit traffic. My father, indeed, declared that after his son’s marriage, he would take measures for putting a stop to the system of forbidden commerce which had established itself all along the coast during the civil war: but long before he did so, I thought I should be many far leagues away from my once-loved native land; and, in the meantime, he was too full of his own thoughts to give much attention to the transactions that were passing around him. He seemed not to perceive the haggard wretchedness which my countenance must have spoken too plainly.

He saw not those signs on the cheek and the eye of Emily Langleigh that told of doubt, and fear, and repugnance towards the union that was about to take place. He remarked not even in my brother, a sort of stern, but restless anxiety, which showed that his heart was not at ease.

Nevertheless, Frank played the part of an attentive suitor in some degree. He was more with Emily than he had hitherto

been; he spoke to her, I believe, tenderly and kindly; though I took good care seldom to be a witness to their conversations; he kept his man, Gabriel Jones, continually on the road between our dwelling and Exeter, bringing rarities and ornaments for the person of his bride; and by a thousand little acts of the same kind, he strove to cover over a degree of cold abstraction, which would too often fall upon him.

All this satisfied my father in regard to him; and doubtless, in the case of Emily, Lord Masterton attributed to native modesty and girlish fears all those signs of reluctance which had their origin in still more powerful feelings. From me, however, none of those signs were hidden; and if I did not construe them aright, it was not for want of seeking their interpretation. All my perceptions—all my thoughts—were confined to what was passing between those two. Everything else had become to me merely mechanical. I may say that I saw nothing—that I felt nothing but what they did and said; and all those rambling thoughts and fancies, which in other days used to go forth from my mind, to wander truant-like about the wide universe, unguided, unrestrained, now seemed totally annihilated. The only way in which imagination exercised her powers was, in giving a thousand varied constructions to every look and word of my brother and Emily Langleigh.

Still my father saw not, or seemed not to see, that I was altogether changed. The only notice he ever took of the gloom that hung over me was, when, two days before my brother's marriage-day, he gave into my own hands the disposal of the estates which had descended to me from my mother, together with a sum of money which had been accumulated during the last year and a half, but had not been invested, as usual, in land.

"I hope, Harry," he said, "that you have not supposed I was going to make over to your brother a large portion of my property, without assigning to you a sufficient income to hold your rank in society. Your mother's fortune will be enough for the present; and your late conduct has shown, that though not yet of age by law, you are quite competent by reason and intellect to manage your own estates. I have only to hope," he proceeded, somewhat gravely, "that we shall see you soon resume the cheerfulness which has lately left you."

I was about to reply, but I felt that if I did, I should say dangerous words that could never be recalled; and merely thanking him for the trust he had in my judgment, I left him, without explanation of my feelings or insight into my heart. I avoided, as far as I could, all the miserable preparations which were made to give splendour to a ceremony that was to doom

me to wretchedness for ever, by seeking almost solely the conversation of Lady Margaret Langleigh; and in doing so, I won the regard of one who was destined to be deeply serviceable to me in after life.

Thus passed two more days of misery; but the third I must speak of by itself.

CHAPTER XV.

It dawned at last—that day of exquisite wretchedness, which centuries of either joy or sorrow could never wear away from my remembrance, even if Time were to fly over my head for ever, with all the blessings and the curses that drop continually from his shadowy wings. It dawned at last; and I quitted my bed, how changed from what I had been, when I used to welcome the bright morning light streaming unclouded into my chamber, as the harbinger of a day of joy, to the eager and hopeful mind of unblighted youth. It is an often used figure of speech to say, I rose like a criminal to execution; but in my case it was so indeed. I rose to a day on which I was to die to hope and happiness for ever; and I prepared to meet my fate with the same calm, steadfast determination, with which a brave man encounters death itself. Like many I have heard of, who, when going to the scaffold, have dressed themselves with painful attention, I trimmed my new-grown beard with care; I spread my long hair down my shoulders; I chose the gayest and most splendid colours from my wardrobe; and placed the highest plume I could find in my hat.

My page stood beside my dressing-table; but the boy was sad and gloomy; and of all the news with which he usually strove to divert me in the morning, he had only to tell me that “Holy Gabriel,” as he had christened my brother’s man, “had brought his master a letter from Exeter, which had made him right glad and happy.” I was thinking of something else; and I took no notice of what he said, when, a moment after, my brother entered with some degree of eagerness in his countenance. “Send away the boy, Harry!” he said; “I want to speak with you.” I desired the boy to go; but, at that moment, my father entered also.

“I am glad to see you dressed, Harry,” he exclaimed. “Hasten down with all speed to receive Sir Charles Mostyn, who is now dismounting in the court. Keep him, and whatever guests may arrive besides, in conversation, till I come. Fie,

Frank! fie! not prepared on your wedding-day! Quick, quick, and dress yourself!"

Frank bit his lip till I thought the blood would have started forth; and I was unfortunately obliged to descend, to receive the few guests who had been invited on the occasion. How I fulfilled the task, Heaven knows; but it certainly was as bitter a one as ever was imposed on man. Several of those who came, remarked how deadly pale I looked; and, attributing the fact to the wounds I had received, asked kindly after my health; but all and each tortured me with congratulations on my brother's wedding, and praised the bride to one who too deeply felt already how beautiful and excellent she was. One had seen her here, and another there. One lauded her for this, and another admired her for that; but the story still ended with what a handsome couple she and Frank would make; and none seemed to perceive that the rack and the thumb-screw would be nothing to that which they were inflicting upon me.

At length—as the ceremony was to be performed in the private chapel attached to the mansion—arrived the clergyman of the parish. He had been our tutor in our earlier years; and soon after Frank came down, they spoke together in a whisper for two or three minutes. The worthy divine looked up in his face, with evident marks of surprise, and I heard him reply to something which the other had said, "Certainly! certainly! as long as possible! but on what excuse?"

"You shall have one," replied my brother; and, as I passed on to another part of the room as quickly as possible, I heard no more.

My father appeared the moment after, and, unbending in some degree from his usual stately coldness, he now welcomed one, and now addressed another, with a few graceful but common-place words of courtesy, and a smile, which perhaps was but little less a matter of convention. "I would have been with you earlier, gentlemen," he said, "but of three swords which I hung by my side successively, I found two rusted to their sheaths. In truth, it is little likely," he added, laughing, "that I should have to draw a blade again in this life; but however, I did not choose to come to my son's wedding with a rusty sword by my side."

"It is strange—it is mighty strange," said an old cavalier, with an ominous shake of the head; "I fear it augurs badly for the King, my lord. It is mighty strange——"

"And still stranger," said my father, "your spoilt dog Rupert, Harry, came fawning on me at my chamber-door, as I opened it; and, in truth, would scarcely let me pass. He held me by

the glove so long, that, unwilling to strike the beast on such a morning, I let him keep it."

"Strange, indeed!" replied the same old cavalier again; and though the conversation turned the moment after into another course, I could see him standing by himself in the window, meditating over what had passed, and marking the minutes by the same foreboding shake of the head.

I took little notice of anything, however. The hour appointed for the ceremony speedily approached, and every moment came with gathered agony upon my heart. At length one of the doors opened, and the whisper of "The bride! the bride!" ran through the guests. I just caught a glimpse of Emily as she entered the room, accompanied by a group of ladies who had collected in her chamber. She was still as beautiful as light; but all the decorations of her bridal array could not conceal that she was as pale as ashes: and it was evident that, if she had not leaned upon the arm of another, she must have fallen, so weak and tottering were her steps. She raised her eyes for a moment, and a quick sharp blush rushed over her face, while, as if by instinct, her glance first met mine amidst all those that surrounded her. I could bear the throbbing of my heart no longer; and turning away sick—sick as death, I walked on into the narrow passage that led towards the chapel. It was a sort of corridor, that went on for some way, with windows on one side, but no door in its whole length till it came to a private one communicating with my father's bedchamber. Beyond that again it opened into a little vestibule, from whence a broad flight of steps descended to the western door of the chapel, which had besides two other entrances to the north and south, and a small door under those very stairs, communicating with the lower part of the house.

I paused near the door of my father's chamber, and strove successfully to call up new courage, to go on through the bitter day as I had determined. I know not well how, but it seemed as if the very intensity of the agony I suffered, gave me new powers of endurance to bear it all to the very close. I felt that it could not last long—that the moment for which I had been summoning all my fortitude had now arrived; and a few moments' thought restored me to calmness—though it was the calmness of despair. After pausing a minute by the door, I heard voices within, although I had left my father with the rest in the withdrawing-room; but concluding the speakers to be servants, when I found the bridal party were approaching towards the chapel, I endeavoured to open the door, in order to let the first persons go by, and then join those that followed. The key, however, had been turned on the other side; the lock

resisted my efforts, and I was obliged to pass my father, as he led on poor Emily, who could not indeed have followed his steps, had not Lady Margaret held her other arm. She did not raise her eyes, but whether she was conscious of my presence or not, I could see her tremble like the aspen as she came near the place where I stood. In scarcely a better frame myself, I joined those that followed, and we entered the chapel; but just as Emily set her foot upon the altar steps, I beheld a sort of wavering sinking of her whole figure, and the next moment she fell back fainting into my father's arms. She soon recovered, and opening her eyes, looked round her with a glance, in which, if ever I beheld despair, it was there.

At that moment, however, Frank, in a low and hurried voice, proposed that, as she seemed so ill, the ceremony should be postponed for a short time.

"No, no!" replied my father, "she is better now—are you not, my child? She will not be well, till the ceremony is over."

His word was law, and the whole party were now arranged round the altar; but the book of prayer was not to be found. It was sought for, through the chapel, in vain; but after a time, another was procured, and the service was begun. The clergyman read slowly; and he marked every word of the service with a painful distinctness, as if he purposely sought to wring my heart. If I might judge, too, from the countenance of my brother, his feelings during those solemn sentences were by no means sweet; for every other minute, his eyes wandered fearfully round the building, as if his mind were anywhere but in the vows he was about to take.

At length, after having read and paused upon every word of the preceding exhortations with a solemnity and a slowness which seemed to me, at least unnecessary, the clergyman proceeded to ask that question, the reply to which seals the most solemn contract which can bind human beings together; but at that moment some steps were heard running down the stairs by which we had entered. My brother paused, ere he replied, and my little page—for it was he that came in so unceremoniously—whispered to me something about "armed men."

My father heard both the irreverent step with which the boy entered the chapel, and the half whisper in which he addressed me; and turning round, he looked angrily towards me, as if to command silence; but my brother, without replying to the question of the clergyman, anxiously pointed to the boy, exclaiming "What does he say? what does he say? Speak, boy! What news bring you? What were you saying?"

"I say," replied the boy, boldly, "that the corridor is full of

armed men, and they are round the chapel too ! There ! there ! Don't you see their steel caps above the window sills ? Look ! Here they come !”

Almost every one started at such tidings, and instinctively turned their eyes towards the casements and doors of the chapel ; though one or two of the younger cavaliers present recovered themselves quickly, and assuming an air of unconcern, hummed a few notes of some blustering air, as the readiest way of covering the temporary surprise into which they had been thrown, and which they considered all unworthy of their warlike nature. The old gentleman alone, who had seemed to draw such evil auguries from my father's anecdotes of the rusty sword, now appeared perfectly prepared for whatever might occur ; and coolly drawing on his righthand glove, he hitched his belt a little forward from the left side, so as to bring his hilt round towards his grasp, almost at the first words the page uttered.

As the boy ended, the southern door of the chapel burst open ; and Habacuc Grimstone, the Exeter magistrate, accompanied by an officer apparently of some rank, and followed by about twenty musketeers, made his appearance. The clergyman shut the book, and an expression of surprise, but certainly not of displeasure, came over the countenance of my brother. Emily clasped her hands, and turned towards me ; and in a moment all was confusion. The parliamentary officer advanced straight towards us ; and to my astonishment, I beheld, as he came nearer, the countenance of Walter Dixon.

“ Major General Dixon,” cried the Exeter magistrate, who hung a little behind, with the air of a bully at a bear-baiting, cheering on his dog, and quite ready to stave and tail, as it is called, but not at all willing to come within the grasp of master Bruin himself, “ I charge you execute your duty towards these prelatie malignants, who cast from them the bread of life, and like dogs return to their vomit. On ! godly Jacob Wilson, and saintly Flee-from-the-wrath-to-come Bilkins ! On ! and second your commander !”

Walter Dixon advanced till he was within about two steps of the altar ; and then, unrolling a paper he held in his hand, he read, “ Master Francis Masterton, commonly called Colonel Masterton, a malignant lately in arms in the county of Kent !”

As he spoke, the two first soldiers who had followed him, laid hands upon my brother, with a degree of violence sufficient—although he offered not the slightest resistance—to tear open his vest ; and I saw resting on his bosom the picture of a woman !—It was not that of Emily Langleigh !

All this had passed in a moment—almost before any one was

aware. My brother, as I have said, made not the slightest opposition to the arrest, nor appeared in any degree to resent the rough treatment of those who seized him. Such things indeed were common in those days; and Walter Dixon proceeded as a matter of course, after his fellows had secured the first upon his list, to read the names of those next to be taken; but my father now drew his sword, and the blades of all the gentlemen present sprang from their sheaths.

"What is the meaning of all this?" exclaimed Lord Masterton. "Gentlemen, this must be resisted! I am superior to any magistrate that I see present; and I will not have my hearth invaded by every Jack who chooses to cant at Exeter. Ring the bell, boy; and we shall soon have bills and blades enough to show these gentlemen another tale."

In the same instant, the terrified women were hurried behind us, and little Ball-o'-fire, catching the bell-rope, rang out such a peal, that hill and dale echoed it for miles around; while, facing the door with our swords in our hands, we opposed ten gentlemen, with four or five servants, to the musketeers who were crowding in by the way which had first given them admittance.

"Advance the file above, Matthew Hutchinson!" shouted Walter Dixon; "down with your muskets;" and in a moment the top of the staircase, at the other end of the chapel, was crowded with musketeers, while at their head appeared Gabriel Jones, or rather Hutchinson, as he was now called; and at the first word of their commander, their arms, with the matches lighted, were brought to bear upon our little group below.

"Lord Masterton, it is in vain to resist!" exclaimed General Dixon. "I have orders here in my hand, from the Council of State, whose authority you dare not deny, to arrest every member of the present party, I believe, except some of the lackeys. Will you surrender?"

My father paused, and turned his eye from the formidable array of muskets that in some degree surrounded us, to the group of trembling women behind him; but his suspense was soon brought to an end by the old cavalier I have before mentioned, towards whose bosom one of the soldiers had advanced, somewhat too near, the muzzle of his piece.

"Surrender!" exclaimed the old man, "never, ye cuckoldy scum!" and putting aside the musket with his left hand, he struck the man vehemently with the hilt of his sword.

"Fire!" cried the voice of Gabriel Jones from above, in a thundering tone, such as I had never before heard issue from his hypocritical lips. "Fire!" and at the same instant the sound of a volley, and a wild scream from the terrified ladies of our party,

shook the roof of the building. One of the soldiers who held my brother was in the line of fire of the troops above, and he fell by the shot of his comrades.

At the same moment, before I was well prepared to act, I felt my father catch my arm. Thinking he did so to withhold me from any rashness, I turned towards him. He was ghastly pale—there was a fearful want of meaning in his eye; and for a moment or two I gazed at him in surprise, for he stood firm upon his feet—but the next minute he reeled; and—after raising his hand twice to his head—he fell dead at my feet without a word or groan to speak the passing of the soul from earth.

There was no time for woe. All was now strife and confusion. The musketeers broke their ranks in pouring down the stairs, and in at the door. The Cavaliers mingled with them; and the clashing swords, detached shots, screams and groans, echoed through the walls dedicated to the God of Peace. It was evident, however, that our efforts were vain, for the superior numbers of the Roundheads put serious resistance out of the question. My brother was already in their hands; two or three of our guests and servants had fallen; two or three more by this time had been hurried through the door as prisoners; and my only hope was to force my way through, and to save Emily Langleigh from the fate which threatened us all. While five or six of the gentlemen present were striving with one party of the soldiers, I sprang upon the musketeer opposite to me; and, after a moment's struggle, wrenched his piece from his hands, and dashed him to the ground with the butt end. His right-hand man fired at my head, but missed me; for almost at the same moment that he pulled the trigger, the dagger of little Ball-o'-fire was in his throat.

"Follow! follow! quick!" cried the boy, whose presence of mind never deserted him, springing towards me while he spoke, and pointing towards the stairs by which he had lately entered, "Catch up the lady! The way under the stairs is clear."

What he said was true. The chapel was full of smoke, which, carried slowly upwards, rolled in thin clouds of blueish white above our heads: but by the open door under the staircase, I could see through a number of vaulted rooms beyond, on the long perspective of whose floors the calm light of a September morning was sleeping peacefully. A quick glance around showed me Emily clinging to the altar, before which the good clergyman had cast himself down in prostrate terror. All form or ceremony, under our present circumstances, was of course out of the question. A moment's delay would have snatched from us our only chance of escape; and throwing my arm round her, I caught her up, and hurried across the chapel. A soldier

instantly started across my path to stay me; but that daring boy again came to my aid, and stooping down, plunged his knife into the tendons of his leg. The man fell headlong, with his steel cap ringing against the stones of the pavement; and Emily besought me, at the same moment, to loose my hold of her.

"I but embarrass you, dear Henry," she cried—"I but embarrass you. I am strong enough to fly, if you will lead me. I am terrified, but not overcome. I can fly, indeed!"

I did as she bade me;—all passed as quick as the lightning. The boy was already through the door; and we were crossing the threshold, when Gabriel Jones marked us as we passed; and darting forward with a look of triumph, and hatred, and mockery, mingling in a sneer that would have done honour to the countenance of a fiend, he seized Emily by the arm.

"Stay, stay! my pretty mistress," he cried, "not so fast! You must wed a better ——"

Those words were the last he ever spoke. The musket I had wrenched from the soldier was still in my right hand; the match was yet lighted; and leaving my hold of Emily, I turned upon him, brought the muzzle within an inch of his head, fired;—and springing up nearly three feet in the air, he fell lifeless, with a cry something between a groan and a scream, too fearful even for memory to dwell upon unnecessarily. Again, I drew Emily forward, closed the door, locked and double-locked it, and catching her once more in my arms, bore her rapidly through all the well-known passages of the house.

"Where are you going?" cried the boy, as he saw me opening the door of the library. "There is no other door!—they will soon find you there!"

But I hurried on, locked the door behind me; and, after a moment's search, found one of the bookcases which, as I well knew, moved upon its centre, in the manner of a door. I threw it open, and we all passed; but just as I was closing it behind me, I heard the voice of Walter Dixon, shouting at the end of the far passage—

"Where is Hutchinson, now? Send him hither, quick! They have escaped by the secret passage he spoke of:—bid him show me where it is."

I thanked Heaven that I had so effectually silenced the miscreant who had betrayed us; and shutting the door, I barred and bolted it with all the means which seemed to be left there for the purpose. Knowing, however, that our farther flight might soon be stopped, by placing sentries round the house, I besought Emily to hasten after me, down the small staircase that opened before us.

"As quickly as I can, Harry," she replied; "but I am rather

faint with all I have gone through. Still, go on ; I will follow you to the last."

This private way into the woods had been shown me by my father in former days ; and though—as the library was his peculiar room, on which no one was permitted to trespass—I was not very familiar with all the particulars, yet I knew that the door which gave exit from it was surrounded by the thickest part of the forest ; and once there, I calculated surely on setting all pursuers at defiance.

We reached the bottom of the staircase ; and, unlocking the little postern door, which opened in the angle of one of the buttresses, issued out into the wood. We were at that moment not twenty yards from the chapel ; but the strife seemed over now ; and all that we could hear through the open windows was the sound of several people talking within, interrupted every now and then by a deep groan, or the clang of a musket grounded on the stone pavement of the building. I felt Emily tremble as she leaned on me ; and putting my finger to my lip, to enjoin silence, I again raised her in my arms, and carried her as fast as I could through the windings of the forest paths. In this manner we reached the top of the cliff, which commanded the cove where the sloop lay. My intention was immediately to set sail for France, and put the wide ocean between us and pursuit ; but what was my surprise, on reaching the point from which I had a view over the whole bay, to behold the smuggler standing out to sea !

Immediate security, however, was the great object, and carrying the dear girl I held to my heart, down the face of the crag, by the zig-zag path which led to the shore, I turned across the bank of loose stones, about half way down, and pushing through some straggling bushes, that had rooted themselves on the rock, entered one of the caves with which I was familiar. I then bade the boy mark well the cave, and, by running down to the shore, ascertain whether the smugglers had left any boat behind, or whether the way to my own boat was clear.

In an instant he sprang down the steepest part of the cliff, and Emily and I were left alone. The tumult of strange mingled feelings that came through my bosom at that moment, is impossible to describe. I had seen my home deluged in blood—I had seen my brother carried away a prisoner—I had seen my father fall dead by my side ; and yet—strange human nature !—the predominant emotion of my heart was joy at beholding Emily Langleigh standing there by me, rescued from the perils of that fearful morning, and free from an union that was worse than death. I make it as a confession, as a

painful confession. Amongst all the many causes I had for sorrow, my first feeling was gratulation!—selfish gratulation!

“Emily, you are safe!” I cried, as I placed her within the cave. “No one will find us here!”

“Thank God!” she said, “thank God! and next to God, I must thank you, dear Henry,” and as she looked at me, the tears started up in her eyes. I felt that there was no cause for longer resisting my own feelings; the picture of Lady Eleanor Fleming that I had seen hanging round my brother’s neck set me free—the long repressed deep feelings which had a thousand times before risen almost to my lips, now broke forth in the expansive gladness of our deliverance. Had the empire of the world—had my fate here and hereafter depended upon my silence, I could not have refrained; and throwing my arms round her I loved, I poured forth the passionate tale of my deep affection in words of fire. I mingled it strangely and wildly with all the recollections of that sad morning; but those very recollections—the dangers from which I had saved her—the agonies I had myself undergone—the uncertainty of the fate before—the darkness of the scenes we had left behind—all gave a power, and a fervour, and a vehemence to the expression of that long, long silent passion, which swept away the common idle forms of life, like straws before a hurricane. She strove not to unclasp the arms that held her—she withdrew not her cheek from the kisses I printed on it—she spoke not a word, but I felt that she loved me, as I loved her; and my heart was satisfied. Her face was bent down, now as crimson as a rose, and her eyes were pressed upon my shoulder, deluging my bosom with tears; but they were drops of agitation, not of sorrow, and I knew for the first time the overpowering joy of being loved. A few minutes calmed her, and gently disengaging herself, she asked, “Why, dear Harry, why did you not tell me this before? Oh! had I known it, I would sooner have died than consent to the sacrifice I had so nearly made this morning. Why, why did you not speak?”

“Because, dearest Emily,” I answered, “my father had pledged his word to yours, to wed you to his eldest son; and because I knew that he would sooner discard us all for ever, than see that promise broken; because, dear girl, I would not become the rival of my own brother, so long as I thought that in any degree his heart went along with the vows he was about to pledge; but now, Emily, I am convinced that it did not.”

“And so am I, Harry!” she replied, “and so have I been long. He never, never loved me; but now I am convinced he loves another. Did you see that picture?” she asked—for even

in the scenes of terror we had just gone through, such a circumstance could not escape the eye of a woman. "Did you see that picture? No, no! he never loved me; and loving another, he was going to marry me! But yet I must not blame him, for was not I about to do the same? Still it was different, for I did not—I would not—know what I then felt. Women, indeed, have a power of feeling very miserable, without striving to discover all the reasons why. I knew that I was wretched, Harry—I knew that I was dooming myself to wretchedness for ever; but I did not know that I—that I, too, loved another. And yet," she continued, drawing a step back, "ought I even now to say so? Am I not nearly your brother's wife—too nearly to retract, Henry? Besides, remember the promise I made your father; and promises to the dead ought, if anything, to be more sacred than promises to the living. Oh, Henry! let us not indulge in dreaming of what is wrong. You have always been a brother to me—a dear, kind brother, and you shall be a brother to me still; and I will love you as a sister."

Such a sudden change of thought—a change, too, so blighting to all my hopes, was not to be listened to without remonstrance; and I was endeavouring to prove to Emily—though God knows the ultimate fate of all was most uncertain—that she was in no degree bound to my brother by any tie, moral or religious. The passion which animated me had been so long familiar to my mind—so all-engrossing, so consuming, that now it was spoken—now it was once breathed beyond the dark sanctuary of my own bosom, it flashed with the impetuosity of the lightning to its object, careless of all that intervened. I remembered past griefs and future prospects, only as they favoured or opposed the love that was thrilling at my heart, and I forgot entirely the dangers that still surrounded us, while I urged with uncontrollable ardour a thousand arguments in opposition to the scruples which had suddenly seized her. I had convinced her, indeed, that the promise which my father had, I found, drawn from her to wed my brother, could only be effective so long as Frank was desirous that it should be so; and I was proceeding to argue that his evident attachment to another person, set her free from the engagement, when loud shouts of pursuit upon the hill above us, called our minds forcibly from the first out-breaking of those passionate feelings, which had so long been painfully imprisoned in our hearts, to the consideration of the peril in which we still stood. As the shouts and cries came nearer and nearer, Emily crept close to my side, and clung to me with a dear twining fold, that made my heart throb with happiness.

"Fear not, dear girl!" I whispered, "fear not! a single arm could defend the mouth of this cave against a host."

"O may it never be tried!" replied she, in the same low tone; and at that moment the voices sounded so close, that I could not doubt the Parliamentarians had traced us, at least as far as the top of the cliff in which the cave was hollowed. It seemed strange to me that they should have so soon discovered our path, through the midst of a perplexed wood, in which a thousand ways crossed and recrossed each other in every different direction; and I could not but conclude that they must have found some means of tracking me, of which I was not aware, as I heard their voices following without deviation every turn I had taken in my flight from the house. Leaning a little forward, I listened; and it all became plain in a moment.

"Hie on! hie on, Ranger!" cried one voice. "Hark forward! hark forward!" shouted another. "What, at fault! Try back again, Ranger," said the first. "He does not answer to the name of Ranger," observed a third. "The old forester said his name was Rupert."

It was indeed my favourite and faithful dog Rupert, which the villains had set upon my track. The poor beast would have discovered me anywhere. If I lost him in the deepest forest, or the most frequented thoroughfare, he would not miss a step of the way till he rejoined me; and now, it was clear that he was tracing my path before my pursuers, and, even by the impulse of fond affection, dooming his master to imprisonment and death.

What was to be done? There was no earthly means of staying his progress, or repelling him from the cave. If taken, death would probably be my fate for the resistance I had offered, in common with others, and for the blood which had been consequently spilt. And then what would become of Emily? the dear beloved girl, who, in the simplicity of young and innocent love, had just dizzied my very brain with the happiness of acknowledged affection? What would become of her, in the hands of a set of brutal villains, who, nine times out of ten, affected superior sanctity but as the hypocritical cloak of foul and unruly passions?

I heard the feet of one of the soldiers, rushing down the last turn of the zig-zag that led near the mouth of the cave, and the eager panting of the dog, as its peculiar instinct taught it that it was nearing its master. I looked at Emily; and I contemplated as the only resource, to hurl the animal over the edge, the moment it approached, as if it had fallen from the narrow ledge, along which it must run to reach the cave. But then it

was a terrible task, to slay the poor dog for its very affection, and my mind was still undecided when it turned towards the cave. One soldier alone seemed to keep near the dog, for the path was too steep and rugged to be trod rapidly by any but bold and daring climbers; and even he was only just in time to mark the place where it turned off from the beaten track, and crossed the bushes.

"Here! here!" he cried, pausing upon the scanty space afforded by a giddy shelf of rock, and shouting to his companions above. "Hola! here!" and as he cried the dog ran into the cave, and sprang fondling upon me. "Hola! hola! Come on! come on! They are here!" cried the soldier.

It was all over! We were discovered!—but at that very moment there was the ringing sound of a gunshot from below; and while Emily with instinctive judgment caught up the spaniel in her arms, and stilled its joy at finding us, in the deepest part of the cave, I sprang forward just sufficiently to see through the brushwood. The round-headed fanatic was within two steps; but the shot we had heard had silenced him for ever; and after reeling for a moment drunkenly on the edge, without power to utter a word, he fell headlong down the rock to the beach below. Directly after, three of his comrades followed along the path, shouting imprecations against the slayer of the first. They paused on the same ledge where he had stood the moment before—looked down—and oh! what an instant of dreadful suspense it was while they stood there, as if in doubt. There are some minutes that feel like a lifetime, and that was one, but it was but a minute after all; for Walter Dixon, who was one of the three, almost immediately pointed downwards with his hand, exclaiming "There! there! Quick! and we shall have them yet," and dashing onward down the open path, they were instantly lost to my sight in the turnings which the road necessarily took in descending the steep face of the crag.

I breathed at ease; but I still both listened and gazed; and, in a minute after, I saw my own little skiff put out to sea from below the cliff, with two persons on board, and, under all the sail she could carry, steer direct for the sloop that was standing off and on, in the bay.

Whoever were the persons in the boat, one of them was evidently mistaken by the fanatics for myself, and their pursuit was over when the boat got out to sea. A minute or two after, another soldier came down from above; and, after a short interval, the four returned, bearing up amongst them the body of the man who had been shot from the beach. They passed again within ten yards of the mouth of the cave, and I could hear the trail of

the dead man's feet, as they half drew, half carried him, up the steep. Their steps receded however, were lost, and once more, in the joy of security, I clasped Emily to my heart.

We were now indeed safe for the time; but caution and patience were wanted still to effect our ultimate escape. If, as I believed, the two persons I had seen in the boat were my little Ball-o'-fire and one of the boatmen he had accidentally met with, beyond doubt, I thought, they would return to seek us; but equally beyond doubt they would not return till night. All that we could do then was to remain calmly where we were; and seating ourselves in the farthest part of the cave, we talked long and earnestly over all that had passed, and all that was to come.

In truth it was as strange a sight to see, as ever man beheld, so lovely a creature as Emily Langleigh, dressed in all the splendour of her bridal attire, sitting on the damp ground of a cold dim cave, and weeping over all the dreadful scenes of her marriage day.

As the hurry and the tumult passed from my brain, and the first selfish gratulation on my own and her security gave way to other memories, in good faith I could have wept too; but weeping was in vain, and the important consideration of our future fate pressed momentarily upon us. We were both calmer. The interruption which had taken place in our conversation, and the moments of anxiety and danger that had intervened since our mutual feelings had first found utterance, seemed to have familiarized us with the theme. It appeared as if several days had passed instead of minutes, and I spoke of all my wishes and all my hopes, not coolly indeed, for that I never could do, but without that wild and impetuous confusion which had attended the first outburst of the passion which had before cost me so many daily struggles to suppress. Emily was all that was gentle, and kind, and affectionate. She had owned her love, and there was nothing more to be owned. But still in regard to the promise she had made, I found her firmer than I expected—firmer than I wished. That promise, she said, my brother's conduct and her own feelings justified her so far in violating, that she would never wed a man who did not love her, and while she loved another. But still, she said, she would never give her hand to any one, till Frank had himself freed her from that promise. She feared not, she said, to write to him, or to tell him all her feelings if she ever met him again; and she doubted not, that both for his own sake and hers, he would at once set her at liberty; but, till that time, she would hold herself bound as if by a vow.

I reasoned, I argued in vain; and at length, when I pointed

out that she must travel far with no other protection than mine, when I spoke of the injury her fair name might sustain by such a circumstance, she laid her hand confidently in mine.

"I do not fear in the least, Harry," she said; "there are but two beings in the world to whom I could be held in any degree responsible, your brother and yourself. As my resolution is fixed, never to give him my hand, (nor does he desire it,) he cannot complain; and surely when you are the witness, the guide, and the guardian of all my steps, you too must be satisfied. As for doubting you, Harry, or for dreaming that I should ever have cause to draw one sigh for your conduct towards me, when my whole reliance, and hope, and confidence are in you, I do not believe that you would form a thought to the injury of Emily Langleigh, for all that the whole earth could give."

She knew nothing of mankind in general, or of any world but the pure world of her own thoughts; and I felt that I could not tell her of half of its baseness, without wounding her feelings, and lowering myself. Determined, therefore, to act as she wished, and be to her as a brother, till I could gain from Frank the renunciation which I doubted not he would willingly give, I ceased to oppose her farther. We now waited impatiently for the coming on of night; and though I twice ventured a few steps amongst the copsewood, to see if I could perceive any person in the vicinity, I did not go near the open path till the stars began to look out through the clear blue sky.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE night came on calm and clear; and the star Jupiter, with his soft sweet light, shone more and more distinct every minute in the opposite sky. Every bosom, I believe, has its own peculiar sort of superstition; and, in spite of reason, I have always connected in my own mind that star with my fate. When it has looked dim and dull, I have tried not to feel depressed; and when, as that night, it has shone bright and clear, I have always drawn hope and consolation from its aspect. It looked out for some time quite alone in the sky, which remained full of the radiance of day long after the sun had set; but at length, one after another, the fixed stars began to appear; and the blue robe of heaven was all gemmed with shining light. Running my eye, from time to time, over the darkening bosom of the sea I strove to discover whether any boat came off from the sloop which lay a dim black mass about three miles from shore.

None, however, appeared; and, after waiting some time, I left Emily, holding poor Rupert in the cave; and promising not to go far, ventured out to see what was passing around.

Pausing and listening every now and then, as I advanced, I came down within about twenty yards of the sea-shore; but the tide was flowing in, with rather a full swell; and I could see nothing, but one dark mass of waters, as, partially relieved by the white foam, it came rolling in dim waves, one billow over the other. A moment after, however, I thought I heard voices borne along with the roar of the waters. After a time they became more and more distinct; and I could see a boat heaving up over the waves not far from the shore, and making for the cove where the smuggler had landed his goods. As there might still be a doubt, I drew cautiously back to the cave, to which place my little messenger was sure to direct his steps; and as I ascended the path, I heard the rush of the boat into the cove, the unshipping of the oars, and the landing of the men.

Worn out by fatigue and agitation, Emily was asleep when I returned; and her fair beautiful face, which looked like that of some lovely statue, had fallen down upon the silky black spaniel that lay sleeping also, on the little ledge where the dear girl had rested her arm. In the dim light of the cave she looked as if she were dead; and as my mind turned to the events of the morning, when a thousand chances of death had surrounded her, a cold shudder came over me, at the memory of what had passed, and the risk that she had run. The ideas thus called up, were anything but agreeable; and yet I could not wake her. There was a sort of fascination in those contemplations, sad as they were, that I could not conquer; and I stood and let my mind range on into time.

"If she become mine," I thought, "and fate should destine me to survive her, even thus, sometime or another, must I contemplate her, lying in death, when a thousand endearing memories, accumulated during life, have attached her still more to my heart. Thus must I gaze upon that fair pure brow for the last time, ere I consign it to the earth. Now, the lightest touch will wake her into being and animation, and brightness and love; but when that day comes, the fondest kiss from her husband's lips will fail to call her into recollection. I must then gaze without any hope, but that which comes from beyond the grave."

Oh, it is a sad and solemn thing to look upon one that we love dearly, in so deep and still a sleep! There is something awful in it beyond repose. The strange mystery of sleep itself, that extraordinary suspension of the soul's commune with external things, that temporary extinction of being, so like death

itself—an extinction which would render death too fearful in the contemplation, if we did not escape from it in the hope of immortality—is not alone that which makes the sight nearly allied to pain. It is not the picture of our own death we see, so much as that of the beloved. It is the prophetic spirit within, speaking of ties to be broken, and of hopes to fail, and of affections to wither, while a thousand cherished memories twine funeral flowers to decorate the bier of the future. The only thing whose slumber does not seem to speak of death is an infant.

As I was still gazing, I felt some one pull my sleeve behind; and turning, beheld little Ball-o'-fire, who had glided in perfectly unperceived.

"The boat is here," he whispered, "and the people ready to obey your commands."

"What made the sloop get out into the bay?" I asked, in the same tone. "Its absence had nearly lost our lives."

My voice instantly woke Emily from her slumber; and starting up, she gazed wildly at the boy for a moment; but his presence explained itself; and he proceeded to answer my question, by informing me that the smugglers had been alarmed by the passage of soldiers through the country that morning; and, fearing that they were betrayed or discovered, had put to sea, leaving a man on a hill near Masterton House, to make a signal when the troops were gone.

Notwithstanding all the news which the boy brought to them, and his desire that they should return and deliver us even by force, they could not be persuaded even to send a boat on shore, till that signal was made. It was to be a fire lighted on the hill where the man was posted; and about ten minutes before the boat left the ship, the beacon had been kindled; in consequence of which, the captain of the sloop had not only sent a boat well manned on shore, but had also determined on bringing his vessel again into the neighbourhood of the cove.

This information changed all our plans. If the soldiers had indeed left Masterton House, I determined immediately to return thither myself, and ascertain more clearly the whole events of that unfortunate day. But Emily, who had heard the whole of the boy's account, entreated that at least I would not venture thither till I had taken the means to assure myself that the house was clear. In my little page, however, I had a ready messenger; and he at once undertook to go and gain all tidings from the man who had been left to watch upon the hill.

To the praises which I bestowed upon him for his courage and his conduct, he turned almost an inattentive ear; and only asked in return—

"Was not that a neat shot at two hundred yards, which tumbled the robustious Roundhead over the cliff? I found your long gun loaded in the boat-house; and once I thought of shooting the dog, as I saw it leading them down the bank; but then, when I perceived that to bring down the Parliamentary would do just as well, I whizzed him the bullet just under the bandoleer, and sailed away with old Tom, the boatman, for the sloop. I made myself as big as I could; and folded my arms, and cocked my hat, that the fools might take me for you; and so I believe they did, for with a fair wind, we were half a mile from shore, before they got down to the beach."

Such was the habit of danger and bloodshed in which the lad had been brought up, that his own life, or that of a fellow-being, seemed to him a matter of very little import; and such were the inveterate prejudices he had acquired by living from his birth alone with one party, that he spoke on all occasions of the slaying of one of the Parliamentary partizans but as the death of some noxious animal.

While he started away up the hill, I proceeded to speak with the smugglers at the cove; and found them perfectly ready to obey my commands in everything, provided they were paid for it. The means of satisfying them, fortunately, I possessed; for on the morning of that very day—with the intention of quitting England for ever, as soon as Emily Langleigh was the wife of another—I had loaded my purse with all the money which my father had placed at my disposal two days before. Part was in bills on goldsmiths in London, but near two hundred pounds was in gold, and a few pieces, as an earnest of future payment, made the smugglers my men for ever. I now stationed two above the ledge that led to the cave, and two below; and procuring from them the means of arming myself more completely—for hitherto I had possessed nothing but my sword—I waited for the return of little Ball-o'-fire, to set out myself with three of the sailors, for the purpose of ascertaining the events which had taken place after I quitted the chapel.

The boy was not long in coming—for his activity was most extraordinary; and in the short time he had been absent, he had gathered more intelligence than a common scout would have brought in a day. The man on the hill, he said, had seen no body of people ride from the house till nearly sunset. An occasional horseman, indeed, had come and gone; but it was not till late that he saw the whole troop, as it appeared to him, quit the place, carrying with them a number of prisoners. This was the sum of *his* news; but, after quitting him, the boy had made his way to the house, where he had seen, through the wood, a sentry at the front door. Proceeding thence to the

back of the house, he had climbed unperceived to the windows of each of the rooms in the lower story, and declared that only one, besides the servants' offices, was tenanted. In that one, he had seen two of the fanatics carousing after their day's exploits. Neither of them, however, belonged to the order of military saints; and, from all that he saw, he judged the house but slightly guarded.

Such news immediately determined my movements, although Emily, I saw, would fain have had me abandon my intention. She did not oppose me, indeed; but she clasped her hands with a look of mingled fear and resignation, which had almost turned me from my purpose.

At the mouth of the cave, I left little Ball-o'-fire as the best guard that I could assign her, and set out upon an expedition, some of the events of which I own I am heartily ashamed of. I must plead, however, beforehand, that no man was ever placed in a situation more fitted to excite violent and angry passions in his breast, than that in which I stood.

Approaching quietly through the woods, followed by the three well-armed sailors from the smuggler, I soon came in sight of the man who was placed to keep guard at the door, and at the first glance perceived that nothing military could possibly form any part of his real profession. Little precaution was necessary to surprise him. We were upon him in a moment: the firelock was snatched from his hands; and silence being enforced, by a pistol held to his head, he stood gaping in terror and astonishment. We now tied him hand and foot, with some ropes that had been brought from the boat; and ascending the steps, I pushed open the door, and entered the great hall.

I never remember to have seen it before without finding some of the retainers of the family ready to answer a summons, or to welcome a guest; but now it was totally vacant, and the dim lamp, whose feeble rays twinkled along the rusty suits of armour, and the branching trophies of our forest sport, looked like the last poor heir of a decaying family, endeavouring to increase his own faint lustre by reflection from the proud memories of ages past.

The room where the boy had represented the two fanatics as carousing was at the other extreme of the house; but it was not thither that I turned my steps in the first place. Leaving one of my new followers to guard the door, I proceeded with a hasty pace towards the chapel. There was a light burning within; and I listened at the door, as it stood ajar, but there was no sound, and I entered.

Oh, what a sight it was! Some one had lighted the great lamp in the middle; and its beams, spreading all through the

place, fell upon a thousand objects, such as seldom, I believe, have been mingled in one spot. In twenty places, the fine oak carving and gilded railwork were torn and perforated with musket balls. The marble pavement was soiled with struggling feet, and stained with gore. Two dead bodies were stretched at length on the benches where we usually sat when service was there performed; while from pillar to pillar hung the garlands of late flowers, which had been collected at great expense for Emily's marriage-day; and trampled and bloody on the pavement lay a multitude of the same frail blossoms, which had been strewed upon her path that morning. A hat and plume lay here; a cloak was cast down there; and, as I advanced through the aisle, I kicked a rapier from my way, and set my foot upon a discharged pistol. The whole place remained as the fray had left it; and the only sign of care, or even of decency, that was visible, appeared in the arrangement of those who had fallen, whose limbs had been composed, and whose bodies had been removed from the exact place where they had died, and were now laid out in different parts of the chapel.

With an aching heart, and a shuddering frame, I advanced amongst the dead, towards two bodies that were stretched upon the steps of the altar. The one—every fibre of my whole frame told me, long before I was near it, was that of my father; and, beside it, the indecent villains had placed the traitorous, detestable slave who had betrayed us all. Good God!—the canting fanatic—the low, base, abhorred carcass of the hypocritical menial, whose whole life had been a lie, and who died in the midst of his own treachery, to lie beside the upright, the noble, the inflexible lord, to whose death he was accessory!

It was too much for human nature to bear; and striding up to the altar, I spurned the body down the steps with my heel, as if it had been the carcass of a dog. As I did so, a voice near me said—"Forbear!—Henry Masterton, forbear!"

I am but little of a believer in spectres, notwithstanding the arguments of our good friend Glanville; but, I acknowledge, I started with some feelings of awe at those words, pronounced so suddenly beside me, at such an hour, and in such a place. But the matter was explained in a moment; for, on turning round, I saw that the door which led into the wood was open, and in the dark portal, over which the branches of the old forest-trees cast a deeper gloom than night itself, I beheld Lady Margaret Langleigh.

"Forbear! my dear young gentleman, forbear!" she said. "The offences of that clay are over; the offences of the spirit which inhabited it are judged by the only Just One."

I felt ashamed that any one had seen the unworthy act of

hatred I had committed, and hastily demanded how she had escaped from the horrible scenes of the morning, and from the imprisonment to which all the rest who had been found in the chapel had apparently been subjected.

"I took refuge in the wood," she replied. "I saw you and our poor Emily fly through the door beside the staircase. Those who rushed in pursuit of you cut off the same path from any one else; but in a moment after, I remarked that the door into the forest was comparatively free, and with what little strength I possessed, I made my way to it, found it open, and got into the park. There, amidst the brushwood and the long grass, I contrived to conceal myself, even while they were searching for you through every part of the forest. I have been too much accustomed through life, my dear Henry, to such terrible scenes, not to have all my faculties at command, to remark everything that passes; and I soon gathered, by one sign or another, that those who pursued you had been baffled in their chase. I might have got away on foot; but as my name is probably in the warrant from the Council of State, they would soon have found me if I returned to my own poor dwelling; and I also had some hope of seeing you and our dear Emily again. I remained therefore concealed till about half an hour ago, when, on approaching the chapel, I saw some one engaged in lighting the lamp, and apparently about to rifle the dead. He saw me too, and took me, I believe, for something unearthly, for he fled with no small speed; and I remained watching near the door, fearful of entering, lest he should return, yet sufficiently overcome with fatigue and exhaustion to covet repose even by these poor silent things of clay."

My story, as far as I thought fit to tell it, was soon told; and Lady Margaret, without absolutely promising to accompany Emily and myself to France, agreed at once to return with me to the place where I had left one so dear to us both.

"Come and rest in the great hall, dear lady," I said; "I have yet some duties to perform here, and I have to drive back some of the wolves to Exeter. After that, we will rejoice our Emily as you so kindly call her, and determine the plans to which this terrible day must drive us."

After supporting Lady Margaret to the hall, I led my two sailors at once to the little parlour as it was called, where my page had seen the fanatics through the window; and with pistols in our hands, we entered the room at once. Habacuc Grimstone, with his nose glistening from the streams of the strong waters before him, sat at one end of the table; and another of his tribe—I neither knew nor cared who—at the other. Both started upon their feet; but their feet, from the godly potations

in which they had been indulging, were anything but steady beneath them; and though Habacuc, unsheathing his sword, exclaimed, "Lo! I will go forth against the Philistines," a blow with the butt-end of the pistol brought him to his seat, both more sober and more pacific.

The other worthy showed no signs of pugnacity whatever. His first exclamation had been, "It is the spectre!" but we soon furnished him with very convincing proofs of our substantial existence.

It is useless to dwell upon what followed; I found that Grimstone, and his companion, and a clerk, who had enacted sentinel, had courageously remained after the soldiers had carried off their prisoners, in order, as they said, to keep the house and all that it contained for the Parliamentary commissioners, who were expected late the next evening. What part of the spoil of the Philistines, as they called us, they intended to appropriate to themselves as the reward of their bravery, I do not know; but I am sorry to say, that I ordered their hands to be tied behind their backs, and made the sailors impel them for a mile on the road to Exeter with horsewhips, which were applied most dexterously. The bellows of the fanatics rang in my ears for long, as they were driven on the road, roaring for mercy, and cursing Walter Dixon for the precipitancy with which he had thought fit to withdraw his troops, and march his prisoners towards London.

I have blamed myself since for the treatment that I showed them; but, at the time, believed myself to be highly merciful in not hanging them over the gate, to welcome the Parliamentary commissioners on the following day.

CHAPTER XVII.

My next task was to examine whether any of the old servants had been left in the house; and oh! what a feeling of desolation—what a sense of the breaking up of old associations—of the eternal destruction of that sweet thing, home, came over my heart, as I paced through the lonely chambers of my paternal dwelling, and the wide echoing of my footsteps spoke the dead vacancy of all. Every room had its memories and its feelings. The places where I had played in infancy, and ranged in boyhood, and dreamed in youth, each with the melancholy voice of silence, told that all I remembered, bright joys and transient sorrows, the sports of my earlier, the visions of my later days,

belonged to the solemn, the unchangeable past. The old familiar faces, too, that had surrounded me from my birth to my manhood, were all gone; and the only person I could discover in the house, was an old man who had been butler in former days, but had resigned his keys a year before, to a younger and more active man, and had since enjoyed ease and dignity as a retired officer of the household.

After his first surprise at seeing me was over, I learned from him, that all the servants had been either carried away to Exeter as prisoners, or driven out of the house, except a party of women, whom Habacuc Grimstone had locked up in an upper room, praying all the while that he might not be led into temptation. The old butler had been left to serve the magistrate and his companions; and after making him open the door for the poor girls, who came out of the dark room where they had been confined, one after another, like pigeons out of a dovecot, I chose the two eldest of the bevy, and, with the old man, returned to the chapel to perform the most painful task of all. As I crossed the hall, however, to my surprise, I found little Ball-o'-fire, who had been sent by Emily to ascertain that I was safe; and, charging him to tell her that the house was clear of all enemies, and that I would join her in an hour, I loaded him with some refreshments, of which I knew she must stand much in need, and bade him conduct Lady Margaret Langleigh to the cave.

The sailors had by this time returned, and I proceeded to the chapel, in order to deposit the remains of my father in the vault which contained the dust of many of our ancestors. It was a sad and terrible task; and though he had been stern and reserved towards his children, as towards every one, yet as I gazed upon the marble countenance of the dead, on which death had left scarcely a change of expression, and felt that my eyes beheld that countenance for the last time, every kind word that he had spoken in his life rang in my ear—every fine and noble quality rose to my mind; and the spirit of Lord Masterton, purified from every blemish by affection and regret, was present to the memory of his son, even as that spirit, I humbly trust, stands before the throne of mercy, purified by the love of his Redeemer.

The bullet which had carried his death along with it, had passed through his chest from side to side, but little of his blood was spilt, and his limbs lay calm and composed, as if the body had scarcely felt the parting of the soul. With my own hands I wrapped his head in his cloak, and raising the stone that covered the steps into the vault, we bore him down amongst the dusty memorials of a past race. The coffins of the dead

stood round about us on every side; and the consciousness of all the many tears which must have been shed over that spot, seemed to justify and yet repress my own. We dug a grave under the pavement of the vault; and, placing the body within, I slowly, and with feelings that are difficult to tell, laid the first earth upon my father's head. The drops burst forth as I gave the mattock to another hand; and I too added the tribute of my tears to the sad record of that vault, where generation after generation had wept the broken ties of kindred affection. When all was finished, I laid my father's star and riband upon the grave, to mark the spot for future years; and re-ascending to the chapel, we replaced the stone above the vault.

As we did so, I observed lying near, a folded paper, in the form of a letter, which had evidently dropped unnoticed in the struggle of that morning; and taking it up, I looked for the address. There was none upon it, however, and it had been apparently enclosed in a larger packet, for it was without a seal, and open. Occupied with other thoughts, I held it in my hand for a moment; and it was a chance whether I threw it down, without farther examination, or sought for the contents. At length I unfolded it as I walked from the chapel, and what I saw soon made me pause. It contained but a few lines, written by a female hand, but they were to this effect:—

“Do not doubt, beloved! I am ready and willing to sacrifice all for you. Let everything proceed as if you consented to the whole. Let the ceremony begin, if it be necessary. I have the promise of one who never yet failed me, that it shall be interrupted. However, mark well, that, whatever you do, and whatever occurs, you make no resistance; for though what takes place may seem to menace your safety, remember that your safety has been taken care of by your
ELEANOR.”

And was it my brother—could it indeed be my brother, who had drawn down upon his family all the misery which that day had produced? Such was the first question I asked myself, as I saw that the billet I held in my hand was evidently the writing of Lady Eleanor Fleming, and doubted not for a moment that it had been addressed to Frank Masterton.

The joy which the page had remarked in his countenance, on receiving a packet that morning, the frequent journeys of Gabriel Jones to Exeter, and a thousand circumstances in my brother's conduct, which had appeared strange, were at once explained, by the supposition that Lady Eleanor had undertaken to free him from his difficult situation with regard to Emily, and had fatally fulfilled her promise. Yet what, I asked

myself, could she hope by the means she had used—what but destruction even to the person she loved? Or had she and Frank both been deceived by some deeper plotter still, of whom Gabriel Jones was but another tool? To this opinion my mind turned more and more strongly, as I remembered Frank's anxiety to speak with me alone that very morning. Such a formidable display of military force as had been brought against us, the despatch of a major-general from London, the arrest or death of some of the noblest men in Devonshire, could not be all done to please a woman—could not be all the machinations of a rascally valet.

Still it was evident that the correspondence between Lady Eleanor and Frank Masterton had never ceased since he had returned to his paternal dwelling. Still it was clear, that a passion, which could lead him only into crime and sorrow—a passion which I had fancied was dying away, had been nourished and encouraged, even while he was affecting courtship towards the dear, pure girl, of whose hand he had so nearly deprived me; and I could not but shudder when I considered the mastery which that passion must have attained over his once strong and commanding mind, to make him stoop to such deceit, and fancied the agony that he must feel, from the great share which that deceit had had in his father's death.

I doubted not, however, that punishment—severe and bitter as it must be, when mingled with the scourging of their own conscience—had by this time overtaken both my unhappy brother, and her who had led him on to destruction. I felt sure that both had been deceived; and that while Frank was at this time a prisoner, destined perhaps to be one of the many sacrifices hourly making to political rancour, loaded with the reproaches of his own heart, and the consciousness that to gratify a criminal passion he had contributed to his own fate, to the death of his father, and the ruin of his family, Lady Eleanor Fleming would have before her the sad spectacle of him she loved so passionately, ruined, and perhaps slain, by the very means she had taken to withdraw him from his own duty, while she ran headlong into the breach of her most sacred obligations.

How much better, I thought—how much better would it have been for Frank to have boldly told my father that he could not love Emily Langleigh—to have acknowledged that he loved another, but that his love was hopeless, and to have sought counsel and support from him, placed by nature to afford it to his children. Oh, that fatal want of moral courage, to how many sins and miseries does it not lead the children of earth!

If we dared but encounter our weaknesses, how many more terrible enemies should we escape in our crimes!

Yet while I thus reasoned, I felt that I had not been myself quite sincere. Had I openly informed my brother or my father of my love for Emily Langleigh, perhaps some portion of what had befallen might have been averted. But still, though I took to myself some blame, I felt that my motives and intentions were right; that I had made deep sacrifices, and that I had been actuated by no base or selfish principle.

Such may be considered the summary of the thoughts to which the letter I had discovered gave rise; but other more immediate considerations now forced themselves upon me. I found that a double seal had been placed upon all the doors through the house; and I doubted not that it was the purpose of the Parliamentary commissioners, who were to arrive the next day, to appropriate and divide everything that they could discover in the place; and I feared that those valuable family papers, which nothing could restore, might be lost or destroyed amidst the rapacious pillaging that was likely to ensue.

To carry them with me, in the uncertain and adventurous life to which I was probably destined, would be as great a risk as leaving them where they were; and though the house, like all the houses of its epoch, contained many places constructed for the purposes of concealment, yet the official plunderers of the parliament had, by frequent practice, become wonderfully skilful in detecting all such repositories. Feeling, however, that a change of times must come, when very probably every document of our present state might prove invaluable, I made free with the parliamentary seals on my father's cabinet; and taking out the deeds and titles which it contained, I proceeded alone to one of the most remote and petty bed-chambers in the house, where, raising a square of the oak floor, I deposited the papers, covered them over with a heap of flue and dust, which had collected there during many years, and replacing the board, took care to leave no trace of its removal.

The thought crossed my mind of carrying away with me what plate and jewels I could transport to the ship; but I could not bear the idea of pillaging my father's house, though I knew that all I left would fall into far more unworthy hands. I contented myself, therefore, with sending one of the servants to the apartments of my dear Emily, to bring me the jewels which belonged to her, and such part of her wardrobe as might be most useful to her. Here, however, I found that the plunder had already proceeded far. The girl indeed brought me a quantity of her mistress's clothes, but not a jewel was to be

seen; and in my own chamber I discovered that the same rapacity had been exercised. The very hilt had been wrenched off one of my swords, for the gold with which it was decorated; and one or two trinkets that I possessed, such as rings and hat-buttons, had been swept away with the rest of the moveable plunder.

There was something in this reckless disregard to everything that is at other moments held sacred, that made me sick at heart; and bidding the servants, who had all parents or relations amongst our tenantry, disperse with the morning light, I loaded the sailors of the sloop with the different articles of apparel, which I thought might prove useful in our flight; and once more crossed the threshold of my paternal dwelling.

The moon had by this time risen high, and I could not forbear descending the steps, and walking to the far extreme of the bowling-green, to take one more glance of the old mansion as a whole, before I left it perhaps for ever.

Oh, what a place of memories is the home of our youth; the spot in which we have passed that time of life when every fresh idea, won by the young mind from the world around it, is a positive joy! Those are the days in which we gain; manhood is the time in which we use—perhaps abuse—the store; and age is the period when every hour is a loss. Look at what spot of earth we will, there is none that we shall see with such tender feelings as the passing place of our early hours.

There it stood before me, with its tall dark masses, rising calm and clear upon the solemn moonlight of the sky; while round about, the immemorial trees swept far and wide, a sea of green waving branches, on whose rounded heads the clear light of the planet poured in effulgent gentleness. From every pinnacle and tower, under each old oak and heavy chestnut, from the careful garden with its trim straight rows, from each glade, and grove, and avenue, and lawn, looked forth phantom remembrances of the past. The whole scene was living with thronged associations; but they were associations that for every smile called down a shower of tears. The wringing yearning of the heart for the return of hours gone for ever, was more than I could long bear, and plunging into the dark path that led towards the cliff, I left that place of many memories behind.

The two sailors that I had left to guard the road were firm upon their watch; and as I passed on to the cave, I found that my provident page had added lights to the refreshment that I had bidden him carry thither; and under their influence the place of our retreat formed a wild and singular scene, of which the boy himself, scarce twelve years old—standing at the mouth of the cavern, with a pistol in his hand, backed by the

dim half-lighted excavation, on whose damp and ragged roof and sides the rays of the lamps caught with a fitful glistening—formed not the least extraordinary feature. I found Emily's head resting on the bosom of Lady Margaret Langleigh, whose sad experience in misfortune well qualified her to counsel and assist us in our present state. Each had been weeping; and I saw at once, by Emily's eyes, that all our mutual feelings were now known to her companion; but I saw also by the smile of joy that lighted up the countenances of both on my return, that those feelings were likely to meet with no opposition, from even the maturer judgment of Lady Margaret.

"You have acted nobly, my dear Henry," she said, as I advanced towards them; and those were words of no small consolation, for at moments when we find the noblest and best minds failing around us, it is but natural that we should doubt the very motives of our bosoms. "You have acted nobly, my dear Henry, and well deserve your reward," said Lady Margaret; "and I thank God that brought me near you, for I hope to be of comfort and assistance to you both. Let me be as a mother to you, my children. This land is no longer a land for me. I have nothing to bind me to it, and it will be wiser for us all to spend a season in France, till the storms that desolate our native country are passed. My presence, too, will be a protection to this dear girl, till such time as circumstances permit you, Henry, to be her lawful protector."

"And do you, then, my dear lady," I demanded, "do you then approve of the too severe scruples which Emily—I will not say unkindly—but at least somewhat harshly, places between us. Would it not be better—far better—for this dear girl to yield me her hand at once, as soon as we arrive in France; and give me that right to guard, to support, and guide her, which no other title but that of her husband can bestow?"

"I do not say that she would not be justified in so doing," replied Lady Margaret; "but her not doing so, my dear Harry, proceeds from a delicacy of feelings which the man who seeks her for his wife should be the last to wish lessened even by a shade. Do not suppose, Henry Masterton, that during the time I have spent in the same dwelling with you, and Emily, and your brother, that I have been blind to what was passing around me. Do not suppose that I did not see your passionate love towards her, or her affection for you, unacknowledged as it was even to her own heart; and still less imagine that I have not seen all along the coldness and apathy of your brother towards the woman he was going to wed. That apathy was difficult to account for. It surprised, it distressed me. I mentioned it to your father; who replied coldly, that it was all manner, that he

had had it from a boy. The only other person whom I could have consulted was afar; but still I was unsatisfied; and had more than once nearly demanded of you—yes, of you yourself, Henry Masterton, whether, in the course of your expedition into Kent, your brother had formed any connexion that he was afraid or ashamed to acknowledge to his parent?”

She fixed her eyes keenly on me as she spoke, as if the question were fully as much present as past, and I felt that I reddened under her scrutiny.

“I feel myself still bound, Lady Margaret,” I answered, “as I felt myself bound even when it almost cost me existence, to refrain from divulging anything I may casually know of my brother’s private affairs; but it is very evident to us all——”

“You need say no more, Harry,” replied Lady Margaret. “I see and understand it all. Before I came to Masterton House, Captain Charles Watson, who had once been one of my dead husband’s attendants, and who commanded a troop in the regiment you raised, informed me, that your brother halted so long at a village in Kent, where he spent his whole days with a fair widow, that the soldiers murmured loudly at his delay; that your brother was not wounded in battle, but in a duel; and that you commanded the regiment on all occasions of active service. I ask you not whether this be true, my dear young gentleman; but I tell you that I came to your dwelling grieving that the hand of my poor Emily was to be given to the elder instead of the younger brother. How much more did I grieve, when I found that for that purpose, the course of mutual love was to be crossed in every way! But to speak no more of what is past, I now feel sure from all I have seen, and heard, and pondered, that your brother will willingly resign to you a hand which he does not value at its desert. As soon as he does so, Emily, I am certain, will not hesitate a moment. But till then, Harry, do not press her to violate what she regards as a duty.”

“I will not, Lady Margaret,” I replied; “I will not, dearest Emily; but under such circumstances, my beloved, you must let me take the speediest measures to bring my happiness near. Duty and inclination both call me now towards London. I cannot, I ought not, to leave my brother without aid or assistance, under his present circumstances. I must strive, if possible, to set him free, and at the same time I will undertake to gain his resignation of a hand, that is mine by a thousand better rights than his. I will first accompany you to the coast of France; and then, after having left you in security and comfort, I will disguise my person, and under a feigned name make my way to London. Few people know me, if any, in that part

of the country; and though I may be forced to dissemble, my dissembling in such a cause is more than justifiable."

Emily seemed not a little alarmed at the idea of my venturing into the very vortex of political strife; and I almost believe, that had I pressed her to recant her scruples at that moment, she would not have persisted in awaiting my brother's formal resignation of her hand. But the anxious and painful scenes through which I had lately passed, gave me a sort of thirst for that final and complete certainty which would admit of no doubt or change; and I would have encountered difficulties a thousand-fold greater than my proposed enterprise presented, to remove every shade of fear or regret from my union with Emily Langleigh.

I was sanguine also, and full of hope. The consciousness of being beloved, gave a new spring to my courage and my expectations; and I felt in my bosom that spirit of enterprise, which, when it is strong and permanent, contributes even a greater share than genius to the accomplishment of great designs.

I now informed Lady Margaret that the sloop was at my command for the next month, and inquired whether it might not be wiser to turn our prow towards Holland, whose jealousy of the parliamentary power was avowed, and whose internal circumstances were tranquil, rather than to France, which, under an infant king, and a weak regency, was threatened with disorders as terrible almost as those which convulsed England.

"As I go with you," replied the lady, "my voice shall be for France, for many, many, many reasons;" and, seeing some surprise in my countenance, at her strong predilection for that country, she added, "In the first place, French is as familiar to us all as our own tongue, which, Heaven knows, Dutch is not. In the next place, I hold a small pension from the French government, given to me by our unhappy queen; and believe me, my dear Henry, we shall need to husband all our resources; for though, doubtless, you believe, in the blessed confidence of youth, that with your high spirit, and your good sword, you can win wherewithal to support yourself and Emily at any time; yet I, from the sad experience of age, know that such hopes are often deceitful, and can tell you, that dull want and carking care are hard to be borne, even when love lends his light pinions to aid us in supporting the load."

Emily looked as if she doubted the hard truth that the good old lady spoke; but by assuring Lady Margaret that I had enough to bear our expenses for some time, if managed with frugality, I did more to calm her fears on that score, than any

professions of my powers of endurance would have been able to effect.

I now proposed that the sailors, whom I had left with their companions on the watch, should bring in the packages with which I had charged them, and which contained the means of forming a temporary bed in the cave for Emily and Lady Margaret; but to this the elder lady objected.

"Nay, nay, Henry," she said, "in five years of turbulence and danger, I have learned that in nothing man should lose the moment, and that of all moments, the most necessary to seize, is the moment of escape. Many a noble head has rolled upon the scaffold, by delaying till to-morrow. Let us, my son, depart to-night. Under such a moon as that which is now shining without, we shall be half way to France before to-morrow morning. Hie thee then down to the water, and let us put the green waves between us and danger before another sun rises above the friendly sea."

Emily, too, though exhausted and fatigued, was eager to depart; and I was not unwilling. On going on board, and speaking with the skipper, I found that he also was anxious to quit a shore where he had accomplished all that he wished, and where all that he could expect farther was difficulty, if not danger. The appearance of the soldiers, in the morning, had awakened fears in his bosom, which were not yet allayed; the wind was favourable, the sea was calmer than in the evening, and every thing was prepared to set sail.

I accordingly communicated these tidings to Emily and Lady Margaret; the packages were sent down to the boat, the sailors were recalled, and I led Emily out into the open air. A mingled sensation of terror and agitation seized her as she came forth from the mouth of the cave, and she had nearly fainted; but a moment's pause recalled her courage and renewed her strength, and proceeding slowly down the path to the cove, we entered the boat, which immediately pushing off, we reached the ship, after rolling for a few minutes over the round unsteady waves.

When we were all on board, orders were instantly given for getting under weigh for St. Malo. The only cabin that the ship contained was appropriated to Emily and Lady Margaret; and, at my request, they went down to rest before the vessel got out into the more turbulent waters, that rolled beyond the sheltering arms of the land on each side of the bay. For my own part, sitting down on the deck, with little Ball-o'-fire coiled up almost like a dog at my feet, I gazed now at the electric waves as they flashed in living fire by the side, and now at the moonlight line of coast, that kept slowly receding from my view.

Ere an hour had passed, we had issued forth from my own sweet bay. The wind freshened in our favour, and, holding on a steady course over the wide sea, we put league after league of the dim waters between us and the merry shores of England.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE will pass over the voyage, which offered no incident of any moment. The wind was high, but full in our favour; and the sea, though rough, was not so much so as might have been expected. About seven o'clock the next morning, we caught a distant view of Guernsey; and about twelve, the long line of the French coast, with some low, sandy ground in front, and a range of high rocks and cliffs to the left, appeared in sight. Emily, who had been accustomed from very early years to sail about the bay in my boat, did not suffer at all from sea-sickness; and leaving Lady Margaret below, who, after a terrible night of illness, had now fallen asleep, she came up to watch with me our approach to the shores of France.

For two hours she sat beside me, as the sloop glided on over the blue waters, towards the port, that every moment grew more and more distinct; and those two hours were the shortest that my remembrance can recal through life. Our conversation was desultory and dreamy, but full of hope and love, and not the less sweet, perhaps, that it was tempered by painful memories. All the dreams of our early days came up before us—all the dear sports of our youth. We called up every scene in the past; and tracing out the long progress of our mutual affection through the gone years, now that we knew and understood our feelings we wondered that we had not known them before. Living almost entirely alone, and seeing very little female society, Emily had retained all the beautiful delicacy of a woman's feelings, unmingled with any of the artificial reserve which so often mixes with, or perhaps, I might say, supplies its place. Her affection was acknowledged; and she felt no fear in letting me know the extent of that affection. She sat beside me, and aided me to recal a thousand bright moments of happiness that we had spent together; and on the pictures of the past thus brought before our eyes, the sunshine of love poured full and strong, and lighted every object with a splendour not its own.

Thus time flew; and almost before we knew it, the mouth of the river Rance opened before us, with the beautiful bay into

which it expands, and the multitude of rocky islands starting out of the pure waves, and glistening in the lustrous atmosphere of noon; while high upon our left rose the stern fortifications of St. Malo, and the isthmus of sand which connects, and hardly connects it, with the main land. The moment the ship dropped her anchor, the ramparts above were crowded with people; and when we had landed, a thousand busy tongues about us almost deafened us with questions. Poor Emily was quite bewildered and confused; but, after a few formalities on entering the town, which were at that time greatly abridged in favour of English refugees, we were permitted to seek a dwelling; and soon, in the quiet of our own apartment, had leisure to congratulate each other on our security.

It was a strange and almost awful feeling I confess, to find myself in the midst of a people with whom I had no feelings in common; who wished not with my wishes, and whose sympathies were none of mine:—to be in a strange land, without acquaintance, without resources, and to feel that the ports of my native country were closed by a thousand dangers against my footsteps. I should have experienced that feeling of solitude still more, but as I gazed on Emily, I felt that all I loved was with me; that my friends, my acquaintance, my country, my world, was in her bosom; and that, with her by my side, the desert itself would seem scarce a wilderness in my eyes.

Little Ball-o'-fire had been the first on shore; and *Monsieur le Page*, with his gay dress, and flashing black eyes, seemed to captivate at once all the women of the place, who had gathered round to see us land. The boy, however, could not speak a word of French, and thus lost much of his advantage; but, nevertheless, he was calculated to make his way very well without a tongue; and within ten minutes after our arrival at the inn, he was in the street, and surrounded by half-a-dozen *Malloins*, asking him a thousand questions in a breath, none of which he understood, or would have answered if he had.

Though it had been already determined that we were not to proceed to Paris till my return from London, yet we soon resolved to quit the town of St. Malo, whose high walls and low streets gave us more the sensation of imprisonment than security. It mattered little, indeed, which way we turned our steps; and the facility of procuring boats to ascend the river Rance was our sole motive, I believe, for choosing the town of Dinan for our next resting-place. The sail up that river, the Rance, is perhaps as beautiful as anything that the varied earth can produce; and the morning of our departure was happily in accordance with the scene. Large masses of autumnal clouds floated heavily over the sky, but still the sunshine was predomi-

nant; and the shadows cast upon different parts of the scene but served to give the bright light of the rest, a greater degree of brilliancy. On glided our boat; and as the stream wound in and out amongst its high banks, we soon lost sight of St. Malo. Now darting through a narrow pass between immense cold rocks, which seemed scarcely to leave space for the passage of the boat, we could almost have touched the stony cliffs on either side; and now floating over the bosom of what seemed a wide, calm lake, we could perceive no outlet till we nearly reached the opposite shores. Thus alternately confined between tall crags, and pouring out into wide basins, the beautiful river flowed on; and, breasting its stream, we passed on in sunshine and shade, till, at last, rushing out from one of the deep gorges through which it poured, we beheld an immense extent of undulating country, covered here and there with wood, and broken in various spots with crags, while, brightly relieved by the deep shadow of a cloud which covered all the foreground, the town of Dinan appeared on its high hill behind, with its old battlements catching the full light of the day, as they hung over the bold masses of rock on which the town is perched.

It is wonderful how the feelings of all our hearts were soothed and softened by the beautiful scenery through which we passed. There is something, I know not what, in the aspect of nature in her loveliness, that has a strange gift of happiness; and could I choose, when any of life's great misfortunes fall upon me, I should desire to be carried to some new and magnificent scenes, certain that I should thence derive greater consolation than the tongue of eloquence ever yet poured forth. Is it, that in the presence of the great and lovely works of God, the petty cares of humanity are reprov'd?—or is it that their beauty and their harmony convince the soul of his goodness and his love, while their majesty brings to our small senses a tangible image of his great power; and the whole shows that his will is right?

I do not know—but whereas at St. Malo some sad memories, and painful anticipations, had begun to crowd upon our minds, before we got to Dinan, a softening shadow had fallen over the past, while hope lighted up the future anew. In pursuance of our plan, as soon as we reached the town we made inquiries, as if casually, in regard to the various convents in the neighbourhood; and having found one which promised in every respect to afford a comfortable abode to Emily and Lady Margaret, during my absence, I proceeded to ascertain whether the Superior were inclined to receive two English ladies as boarders. She was a venerable old lady, not unlike Lady Margaret herself in appearance; and after conversing with her for some time in the

parlour, I found that the only objection would be the fact of the ladies being Protestants.

"If they had no scruple, however," the abbess said, "to attend the service of the chapel, she would willingly receive them;" and it was finally arranged, that for the small sum of thirty crowns per month, they were to have the best accommodation which the convent could afford. The next morning I conducted Lady Margaret and Emily to their abode; and leaving in the hands of the elder lady all the money which would not be wanted for my journey, I took leave of them with as cheerful an aspect as I could assume; but with many a bitter pang and painful apprehension in my heart.

I now returned immediately to the inn, and hearing that in the higher part of the town a large horse-market was actually going on, I climbed the steep street called the Jerseval, and easily procured two of a fine and hardy race of Brittany horses, to carry myself and little Ball-o'-fire back upon our way to England. Their services were immediately wanted; and while they were eating some corn, to enable them to proceed with vigour, I took care that they should be fitted with such saddles and equipments as the place could afford. My departure, however, was delayed for half an hour, by my poor dog Rupert running up to me in the inn-yard, having made his escape from the convent, where I had left him with Emily and Lady Margaret. Not choosing to trust his safe return to the *garçon d'écurie*, and unwilling either to agitate Emily or to distress myself, by going again to the convent, I sent the page to carry back poor Rupert; and during his absence I encountered a person, whose acquaintance, however undesired at first, has followed me to the present day.

I was standing beside one of the horses I had bought, ready to put my foot in the stirrup; the little valise, containing all the clothes I thought necessary to take with me, was on the other beast, which was held ready for the page, and some degree of haste and impatience perhaps was in my countenance, when a large chestnut charger, which from its managed paces I concluded must have belonged to a troop of mountebanks, and grown grey in their service, was led out of one of the stables, followed by a person whose appearance was somewhat singular.

He was a tall meagre man, of about fifty-five years of age, with grizzled mustachoes and hair, and a forehead high, but somewhat narrow; while his head rose up in an immense pile towards the apex, which had grown rather bald. His hat was in hand, and even as he came forth from the stable, when the only thing he could have been contemplating was his horse's tail,

there was a simpering smile of blessed contentment upon his countenance, that spoke him at once the happiest man on earth in his opinion of himself.

His dress was somewhat fantastical also. The tops of his large riding boots were crammed with frills of lace. His vest was green, the baldric of his sword pink, as were his stockings, while the garters, which were very full, were green, and his cloak dark blue. His hat offered a medium between the Spanish slouched hat and the steeple-crowned beaver of that day, which—with a gold band, and a feather stuck in at the side and leaning languishingly back over his left shoulder—completed his dress.

The moment he saw me, he left his horse; and composing his countenance into an expression of the most conceited modesty imaginable, he advanced towards me, made a bow, took another step, and made a second bow, and then begged the honour of saluting me. I was in no frame of mind to be either desirous of forming a fresh acquaintance, or even to be amused with the singularities of my new companion, and consequently I returned his civility but coldly.

"Monsieur was an Englishman?" the stranger asked; but before I could answer, he declared he saw it at once, by a certain *aimable froideur* of manner, which was peculiarly English. He then went on to feel sure that this was the first time I had been in France.

"Sir," continued he, "you are a happy man! I have often wished that for two or three days I could be a foreigner, just to enjoy to the full the exquisite delight of seeing France for the first time. We, sir—we who are accustomed to the beauty of our country, the grace of our countrymen, the loveliness of our women, and, in fact, all the fascinations of France, we become dull, heavy, apathetic, to things that must ravish your senses, who behold them for the first time, and which must almost put you beside yourselves with enjoyment and admiration. Sir, I envy you the privilege of seeing France for the first time!"

I could not but smile at this address, although my thoughts were anything but turned towards amusement; and I replied that I hoped to find that delight in his country which he imagined would fall to my share, for that the circumstances which drove Englishmen from their native land in the present times, rendered some compensation desirable. I was sorry after this reply had passed my lips; for it might naturally have led to some inquiries concerning the political state of England, to which I should not have felt disposed to reply; but my companion's mind was wholly occupied with one subject.

"Doubt it not, sir! doubt it not!" he replied. "What, under

heaven, is there that man may not find in France? But, sir, you are going to ride. This probably is your page, who is now coming in. Let me hope that our way may lie together, in order that as we go I may have the pleasure of explaining to you some things that may be advantageous for you to hear."

"I am afraid," I replied, "that the direction I shall follow is not by any means certain; and also, as it is my intention to travel as quickly as possible, the pace at which I go might not be agreeable to any one less pressed for time than I happen to be at this moment."

"Sir," said my new companion, "the way is perfectly as indifferent to me as it can be to you. I am travelling solely to enjoy the beauties and pleasures of a country unrivalled in ancient or modern Europe; and, for the delight it will give me to accompany you upon the road, I would slacken my horse's pace to a walk. As it is, I am accustomed to ride very fast. Allow me at the same time to point out to you, that there is no country in the world where a stranger meets with so much attention, where he is welcomed with such kindness, entertained with such hospitality, protected with such magnanimity, defended with such generosity, or served with such liberality, as in France."

I wanted no society, and at first felt inclined to reject the stranger's proffered company with some rudeness; but difficulties and dangers of great magnitude teach us no better lesson than to bear trifling ills without wincing. He can do me no harm, I thought, after a short pause; and it is not worth while even to give his innocent vanity a moment's pain, far less quarrel with him outright, to rid myself of an hour or two's babble, which may perhaps serve to divert my thoughts from things that are painful, if not dangerous to rest upon. I bowed my head, therefore, in token of assent to his proposal; and, as little Ball-o'-fire had now returned, I mounted my horse and walked him forward towards the archway that led into the street. My companion at the same time laid his hand upon his horse's shoulder; and though apparently neither very young nor very pliant of muscle, he sprang into the saddle without putting foot in stirrup, raised himself bolt upright on his beast, with a look of ineffable self-satisfaction, and riding up to my side, proceeded with his panegyric on his native country.

"As I was saying, sir, when your page arrived," he continued, "what is there under heaven that man may not find in France?—either given to her naturally by her climate, or brought by the extent of her commerce, and the attractive glory of her name. Situated at a just distance both from the equator and the pole, France comprises within itself the most temperate portion of the

earth, and excels all the countries of Europe in three particulars—*primo*, in being the best situated; *secundo*, in being the most magnanimous and warlike; and *tertio*, in being the most learned and most witty.”

I was now beginning to be in some degree entertained with my companion, from the very excess of absurdity to which he carried the madness of national vanity; and, willing to hear more, as I was destined to hear at all, I resolved to offer a sufficient degree of opposition, to call forth the peculiarities of his character. I am afraid, however, there was a touch of Frank's inclination to sneer mingled with my reply, as I said,—

“In regard to learning, wit, and situation, doubtless France is superior to any other country on the face of the earth; but as to being more warlike, I am afraid that cannot well be proved at the present moment, when England is nothing but one scene of strife from one end to the other.”

“Your pardon! your pardon, my dear sir,” replied the Frenchman, “rebellion cannot justly be called war; and the bloody struggles which are taking place at this moment in England, cannot be held honourable to any party. At the same time, were such civil dissensions any proof of a warlike character, the same are now actually occurring in France, only with this difference, that the French, with the magnanimous loyalty which distinguishes them above any other people, only make war against the minister, not against the king.”

I had no idea, from the specimen of his intellect afforded by his national vanity, that my companion was capable of such subtle distinctions; but I had afterwards many occasions to discover that his patriotic prejudices, if they may be so called, formed the very weakness of a mind, which, on other points, was naturally shrewd; and that, even on those subjects, he could bring many a specious argument to bear with great seeming force. In short, he was the very Don Quixote of nationality; and his powers of landing his beloved country seemed perfectly inexhaustible.

“Do not suppose, my dear sir,” he proceeded, “that my eyes are blinded by partiality for my native country. On my honour, I feel myself as free from national prejudice, as it is possible to be. I see all the excellence of other nations; and admire the peculiar virtues of the Englishman, the German, the Swiss, the Italian, the Spaniard. Nevertheless, I cannot help giving to France the palm, especially in all warlike matters. It is, sir, the theatre of honour and the temple of glory. I am well aware that all other nations upon the earth would attempt, though in vain, to contest this pre-eminence; because the desire which each person naturally feels to form part of a race more powerful

and more illustrious than their neighbours, teaches them to believe that the truth is as they wish; without considering that, as there is but one sun in the sky, there is but one France in the universe, which excels every other country, as much as the sun does every star."

I did not at all feel sure that my companion was not mad; and to ascertain the fact, I turned the conversation, as we passed along, to various other subjects, on all of which he spoke sensibly and shrewdly, as long as he did speak upon them; but, by a thousand most ingenious devices, he managed to turn gently back to France, however dissimilar the topic which we had begun with. To pass the time, I persisted in endeavouring to force him from his favourite matter; and, for more than an hour, strove in vain to pursue any other subject of conversation. At length, as, from the high grounds near Dol, we caught a view of the Mont St. Michael, I said, I wondered that on so favourable a spot for astronomical purposes, an observatory had not been erected.

"It is very extraordinary indeed!" replied he; "but doubtless there is some good reason for it with which we are not acquainted. At a casual glance, we often think that things are both necessary to be done and easy of execution: ay, sir, and even when we have given the matter some consideration, hold the same opinion; when in fact, if we were to examine deeply, we should find that what we conceived easy was impossible; what we judged necessary was useless. Now, my young friend, the best advice which I could give a stranger would be, to think—whatever seemed to him strange, or imperfect, or wrong, while travelling in France—that there is some excellent cause for its being as he sees. Now in regard to astronomical science, a person who did not appreciate fully the excellence of France, might draw from such observations as you have just made, that those branches of science did not flourish amongst us. The exact reverse, however, is known to be the case; and in astronomy, geometry, natural philosophy, it is acknowledged by all, that we excel everything that ancient or modern times have produced. Even while I speak, is not Descartes astonishing the world with some new discovery, and proving the superiority of his own country in all arts and all sciences? Is not Paris the general place of assembly for the learned and the scientific? Do not they flock to France from every quarter of the habitable globe?"

I now found that to attempt any change of subject was quite in vain, and therefore suffered my companion to pursue his happy reveries on the blessed excellence of his native country, uninterrupted, as we journeyed forward from Dol to Pontorson.

These reveries, indeed, when once suffered to proceed, seemed to absorb all his senses. He thought of nothing, he saw nothing else but France; and wanted even that prying curiosity into the affairs of others, which I have met with in many of his countrymen. He asked me no questions, either concerning myself or my country; and, perfectly happy in being listened to so long on the subject nearest his heart, he pointed me out to the landlord of our auberge at Pontorson, in an under voice, as a *garçon du plus grand mérite*; adding something however to express, what a pity it was that I was not a Frenchman.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE landlord at Pontorson served us with great respect, and seemed to know my companion well, calling him Monsieur de Vitray. I consequently took an opportunity of inquiring who and what he was of the worthy aubergiste, whose house and appearance spoke respectability on his own part. The picture drawn of Monsieur de Vitray was very flattering. He had a large estate about seven leagues off, the innkeeper said, but as he was *vieux garçon*, he seldom lived at his château, but spent a part of his time in Paris, and the rest in travelling alone over the country. He was very charitable and liberal; he said further, accomplished and learned, according to an aubergiste's capabilities of judging. "But," added the landlord with a roguish twinkle of the eye, "he loves his own country as well as any man I ever saw; and perhaps he has already told monsieur how very fine a place it is."

This account satisfied me; for, with true English suspicion, I was beginning to fancy, as the stranger was very different from any specimen of human nature which I had hitherto seen, that he must be something different from what he seemed to be; and I had expected more than once, that he would either ask me to play, or attempt some other of the many ways with which French sharpers relieve gulls of their superfluous money.

Monsieur le Marquis de Vitray adhered to his invariable subject, however, during the whole evening; and as I did contrive to glean from the vast stubble field of his conversation, some occasional heads of real information concerning France and its present state, I was not absolutely annoyed, on finding that the journey which he had laid out for himself, before he met with me, led him towards Calais, and that consequently we should most likely travel all the way together.

I did calculate, indeed—though falsely—on his exhausting the subject of France; and I thought I perceived, from occasional glimpses of keen good sense, that I might derive both pleasure and advantage from his knowledge and acquirements, if I could but get him to quit the theme of his insanity, for his partiality towards his native country was nothing better. I therefore not unwillingly arranged to rise early the following morning, and pursue my journey in his company; and, telling me he was delighted to have a farther opportunity of pointing out to me the beauties and excellences of the splendid country we should have to pass through, he left me soon, and retired to bed.

Our onward journey offered little of any interest, but I found that the subject of France was not to be exhausted; and as my only resource, I led my companion to speak of the various parts of the country he had visited, which drew from him many curious details and descriptions, mingled still with immense and extravagant praises of each and every part of the beloved realm, which was the god of his idolatry.

In return for my attention, I found that I had myself excited as much interest in the bosom of Monsieur de Vitray, as any thing on earth not French could do; and towards the end of our sixth or seventh day's journey, he did pause to ask me several leading questions about myself and country. In regard to England, its productions, the manners of its inhabitants, and every other circumstance, except the political divisions of the times, he was totally and potently ignorant; and even of our civil wars he knew very little, except that they had driven many Englishmen into exile; and he mentioned one or two instances of the misery to which some of my noblest countrymen had been reduced by the total failure of all their resources.

My spirits were already sufficiently depressed, and this news did not tend to raise them; when to my surprise, my companion followed up his tidings, by an offer of pecuniary assistance, in case my circumstances required it. I thanked him for his generosity; but told him that for the time, I was in no need of such aid; I added, however, as I found that at heart he was really a liberal and noble-minded man, that in case at any future time, I might need protection, countenance, or any of those services which the native of a country can show a foreigner, I would call upon him to remember his journey from Dinan to Calais.

"Do so! do so!" he said, "and I shall only think myself acting with that propriety and justness of sentiment, which distinguishes the French above every other nation on the earth,

when I do my best endeavours to serve you. But in France, sir, you are sure to find friends. It is the peculiar privilege of her polite and happy people"—and he dashed once more into the old strain.

Our journey was somewhat longer than I had calculated upon, for as we got into the Comté d'Eu, we were obliged to make several considerable circuits to avoid spots which it seemed were notoriously infested by robbers. I was at first inclined to treat the reports we heard at the inns, as the common exaggeration of that most marvellous race of men called innkeepers; but when I found even Monsieur de Vitray acknowledge that various parts of the country called Ponthieu, were so famous for their free foresters that no one could pass without risking his purse, his life, or a detention of several days, in order to extort some ransom, I was obliged to believe a tale so disadvantageous to his native country. It was true, he said, that the principal part of these brigands were foreigners, and happy might the traveller think himself when he fell into the hands of a Frenchman, who was sure at least to show him courtesy, even while he cut his purse. We passed all these dangers, however, in safety; and the day of our arrival at Calais, another suspension of my companion's praises of France took place, as it seemed to strike him for the first time, that I was returning to England. On his asking if such were the case, I informed him that it was, and told him so far, that my object was to procure the liberation of a brother, who was kept there in prison.

He entered with more warmth into the matter than I imagined he could have done; and, on inquiring into my means and hopes of success, he shook his head on hearing that I had neither any letter to the persons in power, who might protect me; nor any apparent business which might serve as a pretext to my stay in London.

"It will never do! it will never do!" he said. "Unless the English are very stupid indeed, they will find you out in a day. But stay, I know a worthy and respectable Avoué in Calais, who has transacted some business for me: and who manufactures, I am told, false papers for smugglers and contraband traders of all kinds; doubtless he can help us, and after supper we will go and consult him."

Supper—and an excellent supper it was—was put upon the table; but its discussion promised to be much longer than I could either have expected or desired; for Monsieur de Vitray took advantage of the excellence of some pigeons *en compote*, to lecture the garçon upon the superiority of France.

"Good God!" he cried, "what country is equal to France?"

Tell me, *mon cher*, are these exquisite pigeons the production of Calais; and were they really stewed in this house?"

The waiter assured him they were so, and he proceeded with increasing zeal: "It is an extraordinary thing—really it is an extraordinary thing, how much France excels all the countries of the earth in small things as well as great! Here, the hearing and the sight, and the smell and the taste, all receive their most perfect satisfaction. As to taste, who could doubt it, with such pigeons before them? But were it necessary to go into proof, it might easily be shown, that both by natural productions and by the art of dressing them, France is incomparably the land of good living. Are not our rivers larded with eels and lampreys, paved with tench and carp, filled with salmon and pike, thick with trout and perch? Does not the air flutter with pheasants, partridges, ortolans, pigeons, plovers, wild duck, widgeons, teal? Are not the fields living with hares and rabbits? Are not our forests thronged with boars and deer, the stag, the roebuck, and the fallow deer? Look at our other productions also. Sip the wines of Burgundy, Champagne, and Medoc! Taste the cheeses of Roquefort and Neufchâtel, and Cantal, the butter of the valley de Campan, the Press vallée, and the Mont d'or! Eat the fruits of Touraine and Languedoc! Season with the oil of Provence. Feed on the capons of Gascony and Maine! Play with the chickens of Caen, the frogs of Paris, and the snails of Epervay!—Go to Rome and Constantinople! traverse Germany and the United Provinces! pause in England! walk through Switzerland! rush across Spain! where—where—where will you meet a country like France? Nowhere! nowhere! on the face of the habitable globe."

Gradually, as he spoke, turning all the time to the unhappy garçon, he had become more and more animated in his discourse; his supper had ceased, his hand, armed with the knife he had been using, was extended in the energy of declamation, while his eyes flashed, and his speech became loud and overpowering. The garçon drew a step back; and little Ball-o'-fire, who sat beside me, without understanding a word that was passing, took the furious gestures he beheld as signals of approaching strife, and laid his hand upon his dagger.

I stopped it, however, before it sprang from its sheath; and the consternation which his vehemence had caused, at length brought our good companion to his senses; when suddenly resuming his calmness and his supper, he proceeded to the conclusion of his pigeon, without a word more.

When supper was over, we turned our steps, according to his first proposal, towards the attorney's house. Having wound through several dark streets, we at length reached the dwelling

of the manufacturer of false papers, to which we were admitted by a dirty woman servant, who lighted us up a long and narrow stair, to the chamber where the attorney was busy in his calling. He was a little, sharp, dingy man, with eyes like black currants, and a beard like a bottle-brush.

It was not till Monsieur de Vitray told him who he was, however, that he remembered my conductor.

"Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!" reiterated he, as soon as it was explained. "I remember very well;—yes, yes! We got the poor devil out of that scrape! Yes, yes, yes! Always very happy to do a kindness to a fellow-creature! I live by assisting folks in distress. Yes, yes, yes! oh yes! remember very well. Pray be seated!"

Monsieur de Vitray now informed him, that it was my intention to go privately to England, where, as it might be dangerous to appear in my own character, I had come to him for assistance on the occasion.

"Oh yes, yes! certainly! yes, yes, yes! nothing so easy," said the attorney. "You shall be come from Messieurs Verité and Franccommerce, at Nantes, bound for Hamburgh; and consigned to Messieurs Chicane and Doubletouche. Yes, yes—yes, yes, yes! nothing so easy. When do you sail? What's the cargo?"

It was now to be explained, that I was not in the precise situation that he supposed; and at length, having made him comprehend exactly what we desired, he laid his finger on the side of his nose, and exclaimed,—

"Yes, yes, yes, yes! I see! I see! What you want is an ostensible object, which can be proved and substantiated to cover your purposes of a different nature. Good! very good! That can be managed too, I should suppose. Holoa, Marguerite! Go and tell Monsieur Lalande, that I want to speak with him as soon as possible. This Monsieur Lalande," he continued, while his dirty maid was gone upon the errand he had given her in charge—"This Monsieur Lalande is one of our best merchants here in Calais; and on account of *certain little pieces of information* which, from time to time, he has furnished to the English Council of State, he is suffered to carry on *certain little branches of trade* with London, which are forbidden to French merchants."

"But how shall I be sure," I demanded, "that one of these little pieces of information, which he may think necessary to communicate to the Government of the Rebel Parliament, may not be that I am in London, if they choose to arrest me as a suspicious person?"

"No, no, no, no!" replied the man of laws, "he knows

better than that. He shall give good security to your friend, Monsieur de Vitray, here, that you run no danger from either the affairs with which he may intrust you, or from any information he may give."

"Such security I shall require to the amount of two thousand louis," rejoined Monsieur de Vitray, "guaranteeing my young friend's safety, as far as this Monsieur Lalande is concerned; for though there is not a nation upon the face of the earth, that can produce such a multitude of honourable, high-spirited, and noble-minded men, as the French people—though delicacy of sentiment, nicety of feeling, and inviolable adherence to their word, may be said to be the true character of Frenchmen; and though no Frenchman, whose blood is pure and unmixed, would, for any temptation—no, not for the empire of the Cæsars—commit a base or dishonourable action, we cannot be always so clear of a man's true origin as to trust the safety of a friend in his hands, without some better assurance of his virtue than merely his *name* being French.

"It is as well," he added, in a whisper to me, "to take the security he offers, for though, Heaven knows, it would be very difficult to prove anything against them if they were to betray us, yet I would certainly pursue the affair; and for the honour of Frenchmen, which by the way is a better security than all their bonds, they would not like to have any dirty business brought before their countrymen."

I felt not a little obliged by the ingenuity with which Monsieur de Vitray modified his prejudices, to agree with his anxiety for my welfare; and, soon after he had done speaking, Monsieur Lalande himself was ushered in. His countenance was not peculiarly prepossessing, but he readily undertook to do that which was required; and, on the moderate consideration of ten louis-d'ors, he furnished me with a letter to his agent in London, ordering I do not know how many hundred pairs of silk stockings, according to sample, and leaving me to discuss with him "*The affair of the aqua vitæ*," of which I knew not one word.

On begging to be enlightened on this subject, the worthy merchant replied, with a grin, that the words he had used would commit me to nothing but a glass of strong waters, which he had never yet known disagreeable to an Englishman. The term was evidently a conventional one between the merchant and his agent; and—satisfied with the bond he gave, neither directly nor indirectly to afford information of my going, to any other person whatsoever—I paid him his money. I then obtained from the attorney certain necessary passes and forms for quitting the French and entering the English ports, whether real or forged I know not; and having satisfied him also, and his

portress, I took my leave with Monsieur de Vitray, and returned to the auberge *du cerf blanc*, where we had alighted.

The next morning, as early as possible, I procured for myself and my page two decent suits of black, which I had not before had time to buy. My horses and equipage of every kind that I could part with, I sold, and did not lose much, considering the circumstances in which I was placed. I caused my long hair to be cut off, shaved away my mustachoes and beard, changed my hat for the most steeple-crowned beaver I could find; and, having given little Ball-o'-fire many a lesson in regard to his demeanour, by which he profited far more than I expected, I prepared to seek a ship to convey me across that fortunate channel which separates England from the rest of Europe.

A fishing-boat was the only means that presented itself; but the sea was calm, and the weather promising; and having taken leave of the kind companion of my last journey, who assured me, as we parted, that I should never be happy till I returned to France, which, beyond all doubt, was the abode of happiness and the garden of delight; I got down to the port, and having made my bargain with the fisherman, was soon bounding over the sunshiny waves towards my native land once more.

My name was now changed to Master Harvey. Little Ball-o'-fire, all enjoyment at the idea of cheating the Roundheads, was Dick, my boy; and never did I see a lad so rapidly take up the part he was to act, and go through every turn of it without overcharging it in the least. Neither he nor I were very well fitted to act as puritans; but there existed, at that time, a large class between them and the Cavaliers, consisting of staid, thoughtful, money-making people. One of this body I was calculated to represent with little difficulty. The events which had lately passed, had left traces sufficiently deep behind them, to take off any of the youthful swagger which might have stamped me as a Cavalier; and the penury of my finances imposed upon me the cautious economy which was a part of the character I proposed to assume. Thus the matter was rendered easy to me; and, in regard to the boy, he seemed to conceive his part at once, and to feel a pleasure in performing it to the life. The natural brevity of speech, which I have before remarked, was no small advantage to him, as it was not likely to lead him into any unwary disclosures, and the early knowledge of the world's worst side, which he had acquired by the wandering and dangerous existence he had led, kept him always on his guard against the curiosity of others.

Thus prepared after a long but easy sail, we landed at Folkestone, intending to pursue our journey to London. The only difficulty that awaited us here, was found in procuring horses.

At length, however, two ugly monsters as ever were seen were produced, for which an enormous price was asked; but as it neither suited my finances, nor the character I wished to play, to disburse so much money on so bad a bargain, I agreed with a carrier, who was setting out the same day for Canterbury, to take my boy and myself on the front of his cart. As we drove slowly away, I heard one of the in-door loiterers ask the worthy hostler, who had recommended strongly the horses I had declined, "Know ye who they be, Bill?"

"Not I," answered the waterer of horses. "Some damned shabby London hosier, I suppose, and his shop-boy. One of those that have neither spirit to cant like a Puritan, nor swear like a Cavalier."

This character, which, on ordinary occasions, would not have sounded very flattering in my ears, now gave me no displeasure. My only fear indeed was, that it might call forth some sally from little Ball-o'-fire, which would not be exactly in harmony with our appearance; but on looking down at his face, I saw that he was sitting with the most demure aspect in the world, while a slight twinkle in the corner of his eye betrayed to me, and me alone, that he had heard what passed, and amused himself with the hostler's compliment.

At Canterbury I found a better store of steeds, and suited myself well at half the price which had been demanded for the bony mountains we had refused at Folkestone. I here also laid in a number of samples of silks and dimities, as I calculated upon passing myself for a trader; and after spending an undisturbed night at the inn, I set out early the following day for London. A long and hard day's riding brought me to the great city, without any accident or occurrence worthy of notice; and under the direction of my little page, who seemed to know every street and alley that it contained, I made my way to a small, neat inn in the ward of Cheap, nearly opposite the spot where I found one of the old crosses formerly stood, which had been pulled down by the Puritans. The boy had chosen excellently well, and perfectly in harmony with my assumed character. The house was the resort of country manufacturers and traders, and combined with cleanness and quiet, comfort and frugality. as it was now approaching towards night, I was shown to a neat small chamber, with a truckle-bed for the boy, by the side of the larger one. The innholder himself, who had led me thither, then demanded and received my orders for refreshment, and left me to contemplate my situation, as I now stood, for the first time, in the capital of my native land, without one friend on earth to whom I could apply, and surrounded on every side by difficulties and dangers.

CHAPTER XX.

OF all kinds of solitude, there is none like the solitude of a great town—so utterly desert, as far as human sympathies go. A great town is like an immense Eastern bazaar, where men buy and sell, and are bought and sold; and without one has some merchantable quality or commodity, or some of the many kinds of coin with which the trade in human relationships is carried on, he is like a beggar in the market-place, and it must be all sterile as the plains of Arabia Petræa.

I had nothing to sell—I could be of assistance to no one; I came not to barter my courage, or my talents, or my strength, or my labour, in raising any man to power, or wealth, or fame; and, on the other hand—of influence, interest, or riches, I had but little or none to pay any human thing I might buy to serve me myself. I knew no one in all the vast mass of buildings that rose in awful murkiness around me; there was not one heart in the whole dark hive that beat in sympathy with mine; and as I gazed from the high window of my chamber, out upon the sea of human dwellings that stretched on every side, I felt more lonely than ever I had done before in my existence.

The sun was setting rapidly in London, and pouring through the foul and smoky air a red and lurid glare;—oh, how unlike the bright effulgence of his decline in the calm country! It was like the purest and the best gifts of Heaven, that we so frequently see darkened and perverted by the passions and the vices of the earthly beings on which they are bestowed. High up as I was, I caught the sinking beams as they streamed through the plague-loaded air; but down in the streets below, darkness had asserted her right of reign, and single lanterns began to creep along the street, lighting the careful burghers from the dens of their daily toil, either to their evening meal or to some dwelling detached from their shops. There was something both painful and degrading in the sight—I know not well what. Viewing them separately—distinct from the great fact of society, and all the sublime consequences that result from the mighty association of human intellects;—viewing them, too, with perhaps somewhat of a jaundiced eye, the race of beings that were there crawling about seemed so near related to the insect—so wormlike in their habits and their state of existence, that I shrank from the idea of partaking the same nature, and, sick at heart, I turned away.

The worthy host was entering at that moment with the supper I had ordered, more indeed for the boy than myself; and he,

seeing me look somewhat pale, pressed me to my meal in a friendly tone, that took off the first layer of misanthropy that was gathering round my heart. He lamented deeply, as he set upon the table some cold roast beef, that I had not arrived in time to partake of it warm, when he had placed it on his guest-table that day—as fine a sirloin as ever was cut! However, it was well nigh as good cold, he said; and as for the plum-porridge that accompanied it, it would do the heart of any man good, though he were as tired as if he had ridden to Coventry.

Little Ball-o'-fire found the viands very satisfactory; and, in truth, a flagon of excellent wine reconciled me greatly, in spite of myself, to being of the same race as the London burghers. As I wanted information also concerning my brother, I desired the host to sit down, and take his share of a tankard—an invitation host never yet refused; and drawing his chair near the fire, which had been kindled for the evening, he sat nearly opposite to me, and did justice to his own wine, seasoning it with several jests and several tales, which brought him occasionally near the subject on which I required intelligence. He spoke cautiously, however, and seemed anxious to discover the political feelings of his guest, before he committed himself by any observations on the state of the country. I doubted not, nevertheless—from a certain laborious effort which he made to bring in a text from the Bible, or some scriptural expression sufficiently misapplied—that the good innholder was not originally of the true blue Presbyterian stuff, which in general formed the materials of the inhabitants of the city. On this supposition I ventured, on one occasion, to call the Parliamentary party Roundheads, as if by accident, at which word mine host had nearly started from his seat; and laying his finger on his lips, looked timidly round, uttering a long “Whew!”

I affected to be surprised at his emotion, and apologised for using a wrong word, saying that I had been so long abroad occupied in my trade, that I did not rightly know the names by which the parties were designated in England.

“Then I’ll tell you what, young gentleman,” replied the host: “take an old fox’s advice, and while you are in London, never mention the word roundhead, or prick-car, or rebel, any more than you would talk of a rope in the house of a man who has been hanged. But sigh, if you can, and look solemn; and speak of the blessed league and covenant, and say a few words about God-fearing folk; and if you have any Scripture phrases, in Heaven’s name make use of them, right or wrong. So shall you pass through this city with good report, and may-be escape the pillory.”

"Why, my good friend," I replied, "I do not intend to do anything to deserve the pillory, and therefore trust to escape it; but as I may fall into other sins, through ignorance, I prithee tell me what has been passing here during the last day or two, that I may know who are good men and who are not. Lords Goring and Capel—how are they held now?"

"Hush, hush!" cried the host; "mention not the names of such black malignants; the name of Satan himself would be more savoury to the nostrils of the saints. They are both of them, thank God, safely housed at Windsor, there to await judgment."

It was evident enough, that the good landlord seasoned his mention of the cavaliers with epithets very different from those which he would have bestowed, had his heart been free; and I proceeded to ask him what had become of Lord Goring's Kentish companions.

"Some in prison—some in prison, alack!" replied the host; "and some wandering about the country. But I must be bustling, I must be bustling," he continued, evidently alarmed at the turn which the conversation had taken. "Here, Jack, Will, carry away Master——"

"Harvey," I said, as he paused for the name.

"Ay, ay, true, Master Harvey's supper. Will, you dog! make haste!" and so saying, the worthy innkeeper took his leave, and left me to seek repose.

I was too much fatigued, and too anxious, to be able to sleep soundly, and after a night of restless and troublous dreams, I rose to consider what course I ought to pursue, to gain tidings of my brother. Up to that moment I had formed no plan for my farther conduct. To reach London and seek for Frank, as best I might, had been my determination, thinking that some means of prosecuting that search would naturally occur to me; but now, the question of how to carry it on, where to begin, or in what manner to proceed, puzzled me completely; and for near half an hour, I continued walking up and down my little chamber, without coming to any conclusion. At length, with little Ball-o'-fire for my guide, I issued forth into the street, in order to proceed to the agent of Monsieur Lalande, one Hezekiah Manuel, in Bucklersbury.

Everything was already in activity and confusion; and my eyes were dazzled, and my ears deafened, with the various sights, sounds, and cries of the streets. There was business and importance too in the air of every one; and though, God knows, I had anxieties enough at heart—amongst the number of grave and thoughtful faces that I encountered, some with eyes fixed upon the stones, some with lips speaking to them-

selves, some looking straightforward, yet seeing nothing but the object of their own thoughts, and running over everything in their way—I felt as if I was the only really idle person there.

After walking along the great thoroughfare for some way, we turned through one or two narrower streets; and on inquiring for Hezekiah Manuel, were directed to a tall gloomy house, with no signs whatever of activity or business in its aspect. As we approached, a single individual came forth, leaving a door, which swung with a weight and pulley, to close itself behind him. In this operation, however, we interrupted it; and going in, found ourselves in the entry of a long warehouse, up the dim extent of which we could see several figures of porters and warehousemen moving about in silence and semi-obscurity.

On our right hand a considerable space had been taken off the warehouse, for what were apparently counting-houses. These were separated from the rest of the building by thick partitions of wood, with here and there a high window, looking up the long perspective of the ware-rooms. A door also, with some effaced inscription, probably purporting that there stood the office, appeared in the wood-work; and thither we directed our steps, knocking first, to obtain permission to enter. A voice shouted to us to come in; and a moment afterwards, we stood in a dull small room, in which were two individuals, one of whom I concluded to be the person I wanted.

There was no great difficulty in distinguishing the trader. His whole appearance at once proclaimed him; but the other individual was not so easily recognised. He was, at the time I entered, leaning with his right arm upon a high desk, and holding his sheathed sword in his left hand, with an air of easy freedom. His figure was fine and manly, and his countenance noble, but stern and dark. His dress was that of an officer of high rank; and yet there was a scrupulous simplicity about it, which went beyond that of the most puritanic of his party. The eyes of both the trader and his companion were fixed upon the door, with something of expectation in them; and as I entered, the exclamation of "It is not he yet," broke from both the strangers at once.

It was not at all my desire to come in collision with any part of the Parliamentary army; and therefore advancing at once to the merchant, I presented him the letter from his correspondent at Calais, telling him at the same time, that as I saw he was busy, I would come back again the following day. He twisted open the letter, however, without answering me, and read the contents.

"Oh, very well, very well, young man," he said, when he

saw what it contained. "To-morrow will do—come about noon. A youth from France," he continued, turning to his companion. "From Lalande, you know, Master Henry, who gives us such good intelligence. But there seems nothing at present."

By the time he had finished his sentence, I was out of the room; and closing the door behind me, was issuing forth into the street, when I was suddenly called back. "Young man! Master What's-your-name!" shouted the merchant. "A word with you! a word with you, if you please."

I turned accordingly, not particularly pleased with the recalculation; and he led the way back to the inner room, where I found his companion seated at a table, and apparently waiting my return. He had Lalande's letter in his hand; and as I entered, politely pointed to a seat. "Sit down, Master Harvey!" he said, in a fine deep voice, running his eye over the letter for my name. "Sit down and answer me a few questions, which I wish resolved concerning the state of France. You are an Englishman, I presume, by your name?" I bowed. "Probably one of the Harveys of Sandwich?" he continued.

"We are from the same origin," I replied; "but I was born in Devonshire."

"Have you been long in France?" he proceeded, rather in a tone of magisterial examination, which did not particularly put me at my ease.

"Some time," I answered, restricting my rejoinders to as few words as possible.

"When did you arrive, and where did you land?" he next demanded.

"I came to England the day before yesterday," I replied, "and landed at Folkestone; from thence proceeded to Canterbury with a carrier, and thence rode to London."

"Good!" said the examiner, "good; and what may be your business or employment?"

"I am at present a traveller," I replied, with rather a double meaning to my words, "and am glad to carry commissions for any good house."

"When go you back to France?" demanded the officer, thoughtfully.

"As soon," I replied, "as I can finish my business here."

"Well, then," said the other, "I will trust you perchance with a commission, when you go thither, which if you execute faithfully and well, you shall have cause to be satisfied. But hark," he added, as the swinging of the outer door made itself heard. "Get you into that inner chamber—I will speak with you more in a few minutes. Close the door!"

As he spoke I arose, and turned towards the inner door, to which he pointed; and as I did so, some one dressed also as a Parliamentary officer, entered by the opposite one. I passed out so rapidly, however, that I could neither myself see who it was that entered, nor could he be seen by him with any distinctness. Little Ball-o'-fire, who was behind me, had a better glance; and we had scarcely entered the room, when he whispered in my ear, that the new comer was the very man who had commanded the soldiers at Masterton House. The first words that were uttered in the other chamber, immediately confirmed this piece of news; and I found that I might congratulate myself on having escaped the friendly glance of my old acquaintance, Master Walter Dixon, by a single moment. I proceeded as far as I could from the door, which little Ball-o'-fire had certainly pushed to, but had not completely closed, instigated by a curiosity, I believe, of which he had his full share. From the distance at which I sat, only a small part of what was said reached my ears; but the boy, notwithstanding several signs I made him to desist, continued to listen, and afterwards repeated to me nearly all that passed.

"Give you good-morrow, Master Ireton," said the well-known tones of Walter Dixon. "Give you good-morrow, Master Manuel; but methinks it would be better for you to avoid the room, while I speak with General Ireton."

"Not in the least," replied the person who had just been speaking to me, and whom I now found to be the well-known, and since more famous Ireton. "Not in the least! Stay, Master Manuel. I shall entreat you, Master Dixon, to keep to general terms, for reasons best known to myself. All that may pass between you and me, can be talked of in such a manner as to commit no one."

"With all my heart!" rejoined Walter Dixon. "But it is to be remembered, too, that my business is to be spoken of as well as yours. However, I care not; great things are seldom arranged by private conversations; and little can be made of anything I can say."

"Well, sir," rejoined Ireton, "the only question between us, and for which I have waited you here near an hour, is whether you will, or will not, undertake to do what was proposed to you by the council of agitators."

"Major-General Ireton," answered Walter Dixon, "you speak as if I were to be at your beck at the slightest word; and that when you write to me from Essex, saying, meet me at such an hour and such a place, I were to leave all other necessary business to do your bidding. Such, however, cannot be the case; I have come out of good-will to meet you, as soon as I

could conveniently; and I have to reply, that if you will insure me the possession of the estates so often held out to me as the reward for my good services, and so often refused when the services were performed—if you will insure them to me, I will undertake what you propose; but if not, you must seek some other man.

“Sir, how can I insure them to you,” demanded Ireton, “when I have but one voice out of many?”

“This is all very specious, Master Ireton,” rejoined the other; “but I have it from the best authority, that you were chiefly the person to oppose their grant to me, notwithstanding the good service I had rendered in staying Masterton’s regiment from joining Goring, till Fairfax beat him.”

“We had no excuse, sir, for sequestrating the estates,” replied Ireton, “and therefore I opposed their being granted to any one but the lady who possessed them.”

“No excuse, sir!” echoed Walter Dixon, in an angry tone. “What, when she received and maintained at her house one of the bitterest malignants of the time; and kept his whole regiment quartered down in the village for five days?”

“How could she help it?” demanded Ireton. “What power had she to resist his stay? where was her force to expel the cavaliers he brought?”

“Pshaw! pshaw! Master Ireton,” answered the other. “The fair dame of Penford-bourne would have lost her lands long ago, had she been less fair. But now, man—now that she is gone, no one knows whither; now that her malignancy is as clear and evident as daylight, or your own republicanism, what reason, in justice or in policy, can be given for not granting me the estates? Am I not her cousin, her next of kin?”

“Ay, but her husband!” said Ireton; “you forget her husband, sir. The estates are his in reversion, and not yours. I know what you would say—that he is a malignant, and a worshipper of the beast, and so forth—this Sir Andrew Fleming. But between you and me, such language must not be talked. Let him worship what beast he will, it matters little to the state. Against the state he has never drawn his sword; and more, he is protected by Mazarin, with whom there is good hope of a treaty, which will take the sting out of the young serpent, that is now riding the seas.”

“So! so! that chimes well with what I heard before,” replied the other; “and so, while Ireton, and Cromwell, and Harrison, are raising up their heads from nothing, and riding in their coaches, I, as good a man as any of them, am to be denied the first and only thing I ask, because a foul, papistical malignant is protected by one of the scarlet brotherhood of Rome! Fie,

Master Ireton—fie, this is not as it should be; and it must be mended too. It would seem as if that man's life were destined to be my plague. Why! how did he escape the fever of which his hypocritical friend Du Tillet died, in the spring-tide? But this must be amended! Major-General Ireton, I will be a whistle for no man's mouth, to call his dogs when he wants them. I will not undertake what your agitators require; I will not go to the fool Parliament, and——"

"Hush! hush! hush!" cried the others, and then followed a conversation in a lower key, which was nearly lost, except an occasional phrase spoken louder for the sake of emphasis. Thus I heard the words,—

"A thousand pound paid you down now by Manuel here."—"Tis a temptation," answered the other, "but it will not do—I am for France." Then followed something more, to which Dixon replied, "No, no, no! Why waste your money on me?—Pride will do it for pure zeal. No, no, I will have all or nothing. The day may come when you will have no excuse to refuse me; and then if you do refuse—why, so be it! Now farewell. But whisper a word of the business in good Colonel Pride's ear, and he will do all you can desire. Farewell!—Manuel, do not forget to see me to-night."

"Whither is he gone, now?" said the voice of the merchant.—"I know not," answered Ireton, carelessly. "Perhaps to betray our secrets to the Parliament: if he do that, he shall have short distance, and a volley.—Perhaps to murder this Sir Andrew Fleming: if he do that, pray God Mazarin hang him! He is no small villain that, I tell thee, Hezekiah Manuel; and I fear much we must give him the estates he covets, though they rightfully belong to a far better man than himself. 'Tis a great pity, that in purifying the state, and lopping away all the monstrous anomalies with which the vices and follies of men have corrupted the only pure and simple form of government, we are obliged to work with such tools as that. Yet what can we do? our enemies use the like against us. If they be hypocrites, we must be hypocrites, and outdo them in hypocrisy. If they employ knaves, we must employ knaves, but make ours the more cunning knavery; and woe be to him alone, whose object in doing so is bad! The end sanctifies the means; but if the end be bad, the means damn him who employs them. That man, Dixon, thinks I do not know him; but I do. He is what may be called a blunt hypocrite, and half his rudeness is affected to cover the cunning of his heart. You heard of that late business of his, and the escape of his prisoner. Oh, how he lamented the chance!—after he had been the denouncer of the malignant—the mover of his arrest—to lose him, when his condemnation

and the sequestration of the estates were sure! Such was his talk; but if it was not all a cunning device, deeply connected with his longings for the other estates, I am deceived. I will tell you what must be done at present; and you, Manuel, must seek me out the man——”

“But you forget,” said the merchant, “the young man in the inner room; he must have heard all——”

“I did not forget him,” replied Ireton; “but the door is shut, and he could make nothing of what has passed, even if he did hear, especially if he be newly come to London. Call him forth, however, and we shall see.”

Little Ball-o'-fire had, as I have said, left a small clink of the door open, when he followed me into the room; but as Ireton spoke the last words he pushed it to, almost imperceptibly, and then sprang to my side, where I sat at the farther end of the apartment, looking out of a narrow window, into a small paved court, where two happy children were playing in the gutter, forming a strange contrast in their innocent gambols, with the dark and knavish words that were continually poured into my ear from the other side.

CHAPTER XXI.

“Now, Master Harvey! now, come out, if you please, and speak with the General,” said the trader, opening the door of the room in which I had been placed. I did as he desired, and re-assumed the seat which I had formerly occupied opposite to Ireton, who fixed on me his keen and penetrating glance, as if he fain would have read the truth in my heart, before he endeavoured to gain it from my lips.

“So, sir!” he said, when I was seated, “may I ask you sincerely, if you have not heard all that passed, between myself and a person just gone?”

“The greater part of it,” I replied, calmly; for I felt very sure that denial would be in vain, and but perhaps involve me in deeper suspicions.

“Boldly answered!” rejoined Ireton; “and I hold you not the worse for answering boldly, Master Harvey. Yet a little farther, if you please; what did you make of what you heard?”

“Simply,” I replied, making use of what commercial terms I had at command, “simply that the house you wanted to deal with pretend to too high commission; that you offered what was reasonable, but they would not come to terms.”

The Parliamentary looked at me a moment with a grim smile. "Right!—right!—right!" he repeated, thoughtfully; "they do pretend to too high a commission!—Think you he understands the full meaning of his words, Manuel?" he demanded, turning to the merchant, who stood beside him.

"No, no!" replied the other; "he uses them but as common commercial terms. Explain to his worship, Master Harvey, what ——"

"It skills not—it skills not," interrupted Ireton, "to waste time upon it; he can make nothing of it. Tell me, young sir, as you crossed from France to England, heard you aught of young Charles Stuart, calling himself Prince of Wales?"

I felt my cheek burn with indignation, and saw the hand of little Ball-o'-fire, who stood beside me, playing with the hilt of his dagger, with rather an ominous degree of familiarity. I answered as briefly as possible, however, that I had come over in an open boat, and had been too full of other thoughts to attend to any political matters whatever.

"Good!" answered Ireton; "good! thou hast done wisely; for such spirits as thine are not fitted to mingle in the hard things of policy. Thou sayest thou art going back to France soon; wilt thou be the bearer of a letter thither for me, for which thou shalt be well rewarded?"

"Good sir," I replied, "I am no letter-carrier; and I would unwillingly mix myself with anything out of my sphere. If it be a commission to any mercantile house, I will willingly charge myself with it, at the ordinary rate of such things; but if it be a matter of politics, I tell you freely, I will none of it."

"Thou art wise and cautious," answered Ireton; "but that with which I would charge thee, is neither commercial nor political. It is but the letter of one friend to another, seeking to render him service; thus far I may tell thee. Many years gone, I should have lost my life at sea, had not a man, who was in the same ship with me, a man whom I had never seen before, saved my life at the imminent peril of his own. Now, though I value life as little as any man that ever yet was born, such a service as that which I received was not to be forgotten, and through life my eye has never been off him who rendered it. Since those days, a thousand changes have come over the world, like the rolling variations of the year; and that which was then but a small seed cast casually into the ground, has now risen to a great tree, and is ready to bear fruit. In a word, I have it now in my power, not to repay the debt of life—that I can never repay—but to render in return a great for a greater service; and I would employ a person totally unconnected with any of the parties that tear this poor distracted land, to seek out the

man I want, and give into his own hand, when he is alone—for he is accompanied frequently by those whose interests are opposed to his, and whose persuasions may lead him into folly—to give into his hand a letter containing tidings which may serve him, and directions which may bring him to high fortune. Wilt thou undertake this charge, young man?"

The republican spoke slowly and earnestly; and there was in his whole manner a degree of noble and manly feeling, that convinced me of his sincerity.

"Without doubting you, sir," I replied, "though these are days of doubt, I will undertake that with which you charge me. I feel sure that you would not, after what you have said, give into my hands any paper which, if found upon me, might compromise me with any party."

"Rest sure of that," replied Ireton. "Deceivers I would willingly deceive. Against hypocrites one must use hypocrisy; but it were a foolish and sinful economy to cheat, when the business may be done by plain dealing. Now tell me where thou lodgest, and the letter shall be sent to thee, with wherewithal to bear the expenses thou mayest incur."

"I lodge at present," I replied, "at the Pack-horse in West Cheap; but, I pray you, let not your communication be long delayed, for I must quit this place as soon as my affairs be finished."

"Before night thou shalt hear more," replied Ireton. "But let me warn thee, youth. Thou hast heard my name and station; mention no word thereof to any man whatsoever; and so tutor thy boy here—who, to say sooth, looks more like some ruffling cavalier's foot-page, than a sober trader's boy—so tutor his tongue, that he come not to lose his ears, by blabbing that he has seen Master Ireton in London, when all the world thought him afar off."

I willingly promised silence myself, and warranted the discretion of my boy; and telling Master Hezekiah Manuel that I should come back the next day, to speak about the silk stockings, (which engagement, however, I never intended to keep,) I made my way out into the street, not a little pleased to have escaped so easily from the dangerous situation in which I had been placed.

My next consideration was, how most readily to change the goldsmith's bills which I had brought with me from Masterton House, into money. The person on whom they were drawn in London was one of the oldest tradesmen of my family; but never having seen me, he could not detect me under my assumed name, even if I presented the bills myself. This I ultimately resolved to do, thinking that it was not at all unlikely that a

person who had always taken an interest in the affairs of my family, and whose prosperity had been greatly brought about by my father's patronage, might have acquired some information of his patron's eldest son, whose arrest must, in all probability, have reached his ears. At the inn, I accordingly made the bills payable to Master George Harvey; and still guided by my boy, set out once more for Milk Street, where the goldsmith lived, close by the little church of St. Mary Magdalene. He was well known, and easily found; but on inquiring for him in his shop, one of the men, who was carefully rolling up some silver dishes in leathern skins, informed me that Master Wilson had just stepped forth, but would be back shortly.

I paused for a moment in the shop; but as I saw that the man viewed me with a suspicious eye, and swept the counter of one or two small articles of jewellery that lay thereon, I told him with somewhat of a smile, that I would return in half an hour; and, walking out, I entered the little church hard by, the door of which stood open. I passed away the time in reading the monumental inscriptions that graced the aisle, and moralising upon the tombstones of many a worthy merchant and fat alderman—Thomas Skinners, and Gerard Gores, and Thomas Hawkinse innumerable; while, set down fair in order, came an account of all the copious posterity of sons and daughters which each had left in his generation. But my mind was little in the business; and while my eyes were busy upon the tombs of the defunct burghers, and an occasional comment on their state or fate crossed my thoughts, another train of ideas proceeded slowly in my brain, the subject of which was Walter Dixon, and his conversation with the republican general.

It were of little use to record all the steps by which I arrived at conclusions on the matter; it is sufficient that, from all I had heard I gained a clearer insight into the late events of my life than I had hitherto possessed. I shall not attempt to puzzle any one who may read these pages, by recording the false suppositions which mingled themselves with the more correct ones that I formed; but those conclusions which proved afterwards to be just, were as follows:—Walter Dixon, evidently the villain I had supposed him from the first, had been guided all through his conduct to my brother and myself, from our first meeting him at Amesbury, by the purpose of preventing our junction with Lord Goring. The reward he proposed to himself, and which probably had been held out to him by some of the leaders of more influence than himself, was the estates of Lady Eleanor Fleming; and, beyond doubt, his scheme was cunningly devised both for making her the means of staying my brother on his march, and for bringing her, by our very stay at her dwelling,

within the list of malignants, as they were called, whose property was confiscated every day for the use of some knave like himself. Gabriel Jones had evidently been merely his agent and spy, bribed perhaps by the prospect of sharing the spoil; and by his directions, undoubtedly, Walter Dixon had followed us from Exeter to Amesbury. From all that had passed, I doubted not that the Parliamentarian had been instigated to denounce my brother, as projecting new schemes of revolt, by Lady Eleanor herself, for the purpose of breaking off his marriage with Emily. This idea was familiar with my mind before, and I thence derived an assurance of my brother's safety, as far as his life went—for I felt sure that her love for him was too great to suffer her to take such steps without having previously ascertained his security. Nevertheless, to find him was still a great object with me: for although, I confess, after all that had happened, I despaired of detaching him from the pursuit of his criminal passion for Lady Eleanor, I could not be satisfied till I had made myself sure of his personal safety. Of course, the more selfish desire of obtaining his renunciation of Emily's hand had its share in my motives; but fraternal affection, notwithstanding all he had done to shake it—notwithstanding that esteem and respect were gone—still made me dream of saving him from the ruin he had brought upon himself, even when the hope of doing so was almost extinguished.

Such was the subject of my ruminations, while I remained in the church of St. Mary Magdalene in Milk Street; and they sufficed to occupy fully more time than I had intended to consume in that place. At length, greatly to the relief of little Ball-o'-fire, who was tired by this time of old monuments and his own thoughts, I once more left the church, and entered the shop of the goldsmith, where I found the worthy merchant himself. He took the bills as a matter of course, and glanced his eye over them.

"Ay!" cried he, as he read the names:—"Master Harry Masterton—and where is he at present, pray, young gentleman?—where is the indorser?"

"He was in France when last I left him," I replied. "Pray, where is his brother? Can you inform me, as I have business to transact with him?"

"Not I—not I! I know nothing of him!" answered the goldsmith hastily, as he counted out the money: "not I—not I! How should I know anything of him? I heard of his being taken as a malignant, and the old lord shot—but I know nothing at all!"

Ever and anon as the old man spoke, he raised his eyes to my face with a sort of furtive yet inquiring glance; and, when

he had counted out the money, put it in a canvass bag, marked, numbered, and sealed it, he laid his hand thereon, saying,—

“You seem tired, young gentleman. If you will come in with me, you shall taste a cup of nappy ale as ever was brewed in the ward of Cripplegate. Will you come in?”

As I could not help suspecting, though I cannot well tell why, that the old goldsmith knew more of my brother than he chose to proclaim to all the world, I did not refuse his invitation; and mounting a dark and narrow stair, which led direct into one side of his shop, he conducted me to a small neat chamber above, round which stood many a rare curiosity from foreign lands, and many a massive piece of plate. He then bade me sit down; and running down again himself with the activity of a squirrel, he brought up, in two or three minutes, a foaming tankard, and a crystal drinking-cup, and then carefully closed the door.

There was a good deal of agitation in his manner, as he set the things he brought down on the table; and when he had done, he stood before me, rubbing his hands in visible perturbation. “I don’t know, young gentleman—I don’t know,” he cried, “God forgive me—I’m not sure; but yet I cannot help thinking, you are very like your lady mother—very like, indeed; a strong resemblance, as I term it—a strong resemblance. I remember very well, when I took her marriage jewels—a pretty creature she was, oh dear! And you are like your brother, too; but not so like him, as like your lady mother.”

“And pray when did you see my brother, Master Wilson?” I demanded, finding the subject opened so unexpectedly. “And where is he, pray?”

“Oh, ’tis but two nights since I saw him, sir,” replied the old man, “when I took him all the money I could raise upon the jewels and plate. But I would not speak about it before the boys in the shop for the world; for I might get myself into trouble, you know.”

“I know nothing, my good Master Wilson,” I replied; “but come to you for information. I have neither seen nor heard of my brother since his arrest.”

“Oh, gracious! then I have a long story to tell,” answered the goldsmith. “But take a cup of ale, sir, take a cup of ale, while I run down and lock up the money-drawer. The lads are honest enough, doubtless; but I never love to put temptation in folk’s way—safe bind safe find, is a good proverb. Take a cup of ale, sir, I will be back directly. I never leave it open—never; but I was so flustered to see you, sir, and to get you up here, that I forgot it till this blessed minute.”

The old man came back in a few moments, less flustered, as

he called it, than he went; and he began and continued a long story, which I am sorry my memory does not serve sufficiently to repeat in his own words. The substance, however, was, that he had been sent for late, about four days before, to speak with a gentleman in Westminster; and though he took boat at the nearest stairs, it was dark before he landed at Whitehall. Following the direction that had been given, he came to a house, where, being brought to a splendid lodging, he found a gentleman sitting in deep mourning, with the most beautiful lady that ever his eyes beheld. The gentleman proved to be my brother; and, forced to explain his circumstances to the worthy goldsmith, he told him that he had been arrested as an obdurate malignant, and brought to London; but that he owed his deliverance solely to the courage and exertions of the lady he saw. He then placed in the old man's hands a large quantity of jewels and plate, and desired him to convert it with all speed into bills of exchange upon Paris. Various interviews took place; for, as Master Wilson said, money was scarcely to be had in the city; trade was nearly ruined with the civil dissensions of the times, and he could not procure, for the articles intrusted to him, anything like their real value. He did not choose therefore to act on his own responsibility, and was more than once obliged to consult Frank on his conduct. The matter, however, was at length finally settled; and the amount of nearly twenty thousand pounds was obtained and transmitted to my brother in bills of exchange.

Whose were the jewels and plate, the old man could not say; but he assured me, that Frank was living apparently at ease, and under little apprehension of being again arrested, although he did not venture out of his dwelling while in London. He had set forth for Paris two days before my arrival; and, as the goldsmith had made particular inquiries, without learning that he had been retaken, he concluded that his flight from England had been uninterrupted.

In answer to some questions I put to him, he informed me that my brother had appeared very grave and sad, except when he was speaking to the lady, who was always with him. "He did not tell me who she was," added the goldsmith; "and though the worthy and respected lord, your father, was good enough to commission some jewels about a month since, for a lady your brother was going to marry, oh, Master Masterton! I do not think the lady I saw there was she. I fear me—I fear me, that my young lord is going wrong. She was as beautiful as a princess, that is certain; and as gentle and as noble as could be; but somehow—I don't know what—she seemed not like his wife either."

I was silent, though I well knew who the person was; and I had myself felt that indescribable something, in the manners and appearance of Lady Eleanor Fleming, that had given so unfavourable an impression to the mind of the worthy goldsmith. There was something in her too sweet, too brilliant, too fascinating. The fire of the heart and the mind was suffered to shine out so brightly, that a doubt was instantly raised, whether it would always be repressed by principle and virtue.

But it was not for me to blazon my brother's errors; and, though the old man evidently sought to know who the lady was, he had seen so constantly by the side of Frank, I was silent. Being assured of his personal safety, I now only endeavoured to discover the means of tracing him in France; but in regard to his course, the goldsmith could give me no information of any kind, except the address of a Jewish house in Paris, on whom the bills of exchange were drawn.

Leaving in his hands the principal part of the money which I had just received, to be invested in bills on the same house, I took with me the sum of one hundred pounds; and after some farther conversation of little moment, I left Master Wilson, with directions to transmit to me the bill, at my lodging in Cheap, by the name of Harvey.

On my arrival at the inn, I visited the stables, to see that my horses were well taken care of; and there I found that some person, doubtless sent by Ireton, had been making minute inquiries concerning me, and endeavouring to ascertain exactly the road I had followed to London. As I knew, however, that everything which they could discover, would prove my former account of my journey to be correct, as far as related to my progress from the coast to the metropolis, these investigations gave me no inquietude, and I sat down to the host's table, at the inn, somewhat reconciled to London, and more at home, amidst its mighty swarms of human beings.

CHAPTER XXII.

I WAS now most anxious to quit a city where my stay could be productive of no farther good; and, in hopes of the arrival, both of the letter which Ireton had promised to send, and of the bills of exchange on Paris, I prepared to set out with the dawn of the following morning. The day went by, however, without the coming of either; and night fell, leaving me not a little impatient, under the apprehension of being detained

another day. Every hour which I passed at a distance from Emily Langleigh, made me both unhappy and anxious. I had never before had any one depending solely upon me for protection and support. I had never yet had one whose whole hopes and wishes centred in my welfare ; and all the dear cares of such a situation were new and sharp upon my mind. I fancied a thousand accidents that might happen to Emily during my absence. I pictured all the anxiety she would feel till my return ; and I anticipated farther delay, with a degree of irritation that it is impossible to describe.

At length, towards eight o'clock, as I was packing up my little store of gold in the valise, which served to render my small page of about equal weight for a horse with myself, one of the drawers ushered into my chamber a man wrapped in a long night-cloak, which being laid aside, immediately discovered to me General Ireton. He sat down on the first vacant chair, and, drawing a small packet from his bosom, gave it into my hands.

"I have come myself, Master Harvey," he said, "in order to charge you to great care in regard to that packet. You will find General St. Maur either in Paris or at St. Germain's. Give it to him, with assurances of my unaltered regard ; and tell him, should he speak to you on politics, that though he may suppose me altered in my opinions, since last we met, such is not the case ; and that while I steadily pursue the destruction of one man's tyranny in England, I will equally oppose the elevation of any other to the same unjust power. But though he and I differ, say to him that is no reason why he should not come over, and take advantage of an opportunity that may never return."

The name General St. Maur struck me as in some degree familiar to my ear ; but at the moment I could not recal where I had heard it ; and putting the packet carefully into the valise, I assured the republican that it should be faithfully delivered to the person for whom it was intended. I made my reply as brief as possible ; for I had no great delight in the society of Master Ireton, though I could not but feel some respect for the stern and uncompromising principles which he displayed in a far higher degree than any other of the Parliamentary leaders. I was anxious that he should go also, for I was every moment afraid that something might happen to betray me ; and as generally occurs when one is desirous of another's absence, he seemed particularly inclined to stay ; sitting smoothing his band, or playing with his sword-knot, and talking with the easy, familiar, and desultory style, of a person conversing with an inferior.

He asked me a number of questions about France; some concerning its commerce, some relating to its natural productions, some referring to the present state of its internal policy. To all I replied as best I could; and doubtless, had Ireton been well acquainted with the subject, he would soon have perceived that I was talking great nonsense. In the midst of this conversation, I heard a step coming up the stairs; and, as I foreboded, in marched Master Wilson, the goldsmith, with a lantern in his hand, and his eyes dazzled by the light of the room. "I have been a long time, Master Harry Masterton," he exclaimed, as he entered—"I have been a long time, but ——" At that moment, his eye fell upon Ireton, seated a little to the right of the door; and I shall not easily forget the air of bewildered astonishment which filled the countenance of the poor goldsmith, as he beheld that face, which he knew full well. He said not a word; his horror and surprise were far too overpowering for that; but with one hand still stretched out, in the act of unfolding his cloak, and the other dangling with the lantern, his mouth wide open, and his eyes stretched to unnatural roundness, he stood gazing upon Ireton, with terror and dismay visible in every line and feature.

Ireton sat with perfect calmness, though he had started at the first sound of my real name; and I stood with no small vexation, waiting for what unpleasant thing was to come next. The first movement amongst us was made by little Ball-o'-fire, who sprang to the door, locked it, and gave me the key.

"So, sir," said Ireton, after a moment's pause, "I have been deceived, and your name is not Harvey, but Masterton——"

"Oh dear! oh dear! What have I done?" exclaimed the poor goldsmith, wringing his hands. "I have ruined him, I have, indeed! This is a terrible non plus, as I term it."

"You *have* been deceived, General Ireton," I replied to the Parliamentary, who sat eyeing me with great composure; "and my name, as you say, is *not* Harvey, but Masterton."

"Ay, and doubtless, sir," he continued, imitating, with somewhat of a sneering tone, the reply I had made to his questions in the morning; "and doubtless you are not of the Mastertons of Kent, but of Devonshire. Probably also, sir, you may be a traveller for a royal *house*, and the last commission intrusted to you was one from Stuart and company."

"You may spare your sneers, General Ireton," I replied. "I deceived you, as you would deceive an adversary, and no more. Accident has discovered to you who I am, and has put me in some degree in your power. It is for you to profit by that accident, as you think fit."

"And do you propose, sir," demanded Ireton—"which I sup-

pose you do, by the key you hold in your hand—to impede my exit from this chamber?”

“Not in the least,” I replied, proceeding to the door and throwing it wide open. “Not in the least! Pass freely, sir. I believe you to be a man of honour, though an enemy; and I doubt not that you will act as a man of honour should do.”

Ireton rose, and walked towards the door; but it was only to close it again. After having done which, he resumed his seat, and waved his hand, to silence the goldsmith, who was begging and praying with piteous tones that he would not betray me. “We must have a few more words before we part, young gentleman,” he said, as soon as the other ceased. “Will you promise me to answer me truly, on your honour?”

“If I answer you at all,” I replied.

“That will do,” he rejoined; “all I desire is, that I may not have to contend with double meanings, like this morning. Are you a son of the late Lord Masterton?”

“I am,” I replied.

“Were you not upon the eve of marrying the Lady Emily Langleigh, when you were arrested by Major-General Dixon?” he then demanded.

“I was not. You mistake me for my brother,” was my answer.

“True! true!” said Ireton, “he must be an older man. Then you are the young gallant that escaped to France. I see it all now. What brought you, then, to London, when you were safely across the water?”

“To see whether I might not render some aid to my brother,” I answered, “after having placed the Lady Emily in safety.”

“She was never in danger,” he replied; “I would take good care of that. But you have heard, of course, that your brother has made his escape, without your assistance. Have you not?”

“I have heard it so rumoured,” I replied, afraid of committing the poor goldsmith; “and therefore I only waited till this good man brought me the bills of exchange upon Paris, in return for those I presented him this morning.”

“And you are really and truly, without deceit, going back direct to France?” demanded Ireton. “Is it so? or is it not? on your honour, Master Masterton?”

“On my honour, then, without I am prevented by your means,” I replied, “I am going back direct, without a day’s delay.”

“Far be it from me to stop you,” replied Ireton. “If I had found you, or your brother either, as lately you appeared in Kent, troubling the peace of England, and striving to set up a

tyranny that is past, I would have had you out and shot you, as I would do a mad dog, or any other dangerous beast; but I would as soon think of taking advantage of an accidental discovery, to destroy a man who had relinquished his evil ways, though not perhaps his evil wishes, as I would think of raising my hand against my own life. Nay, more, young gentleman," he added, "I will still trust you with the packet I gave you but now. The time may come when you will thank me for so doing. May I trust to you to deliver it carefully and well, as I told you, when no one is present but the person to whom it is addressed?"

"My business certainly is not that of a letter-carrier," I replied; "but, nevertheless, you act towards me with such liberality of feeling, that I will not refuse to be the bearer, trusting, as I trusted before, that the packet contains nothing contrary to my allegiance, or to the interest of that party to which I am attached."

"Nothing, I assure you," answered Ireton; "or, as you would say, nothing, upon my honour. I must not now offer," he continued, "to Master Harry Masterton the reward for carrying that letter, which I was about to have bestowed on the humbler Master Harvey. I know you cavaliers hold it one of your points of pride to receive money for nothing but shedding blood. The days are coming, I trust, when there will be better notions of honour than can be given by a long descent. But I must go. Sleep soundly, young gentleman; and, as soon as may be, tread your way back to France, for you might meet with men amongst us who would scruple less to betray you than I do."

As he spoke, he rose to depart; but poor Master Wilson caught him by the cloak, begging most movingly that he would not betray him either.

"Pshaw!" cried Ireton, "betray thee, man! thine own fears betray thee more than any one else can do. What could I know of thy being here, but that thou hadst come to transact some business about bills of exchange with this young man? Keep thine own counsel, and I have nothing to betray. But mark me, Master Wilson, the less thou hast to do with malignants the better: and more—forget, as soon as thou canst, that thou hast seen me here this night; for if thou dost but breathe that I have been within the walls of London for a month past, I will take care that on some occasion thy gold pots are made to answer it."

Thus speaking, the Parliamentary general turned, and left the chamber; and, after a few words of exclamation and surprise, Master Wilson proceeded to hand over to me the bills of exchange

on Paris. He stayed but for a moment after this business was concluded, and then bidding God be with me, hastened away as fast as ever he could, heartily tired and sick, I am convinced, of having anything to do with malignants; and forswearing all transactions for the future with any but the party in power.

As soon as all were gone, I applied myself to the farther packing of my valise, with the assistance of little Ball-o'-fire, who could not refrain from murmuring his sorrow, that I had been obliged to let so favourable an opportunity of running one of the great parliamentary generals through the body, slip by me unemployed.

"It would have paid off long Marston Moor," he said; and nothing I could reply would convince him, that even had such an attempt been perfectly safe, it would have been base and unjustifiable. He could see that it was dangerous, circumstanced as we were, clearly enough; but that there would be anything wrong in killing a rebel, except when one had promised quarter, he could not comprehend at all. His ideas of hostility were perhaps more natural, though less civilized than my own; and he could not fancy, that when men were drawn up in battle array, was to be the only time for bloodshed and strife; and that the same individuals, separated from their companions, might meet and reciprocate acts of even courtesy and friendship. In his eyes, the whole world was as a battle-field, and his enemy was his enemy, whenever or wherever he met him. Such were the lessons he had learned in a hard and ruthless school; and finding that I could silence, but not convince him, I sent him to bed.

The following morning dawned brightly upon our departure; and, after discharging my score to the good landlord of the Pack-horse, we mounted our horses, and set out for Dover, to which town I was fain to turn my steps, from the uncertainty of procuring any passage to one of the ports of France, nearer to the dwelling of my Emily.

My journey to the coast passed over without anything worth noting, and therefore it may be as well to say no more than that we left London, and arrived at Dover in safety. Being now somewhat wealthier than when I had last passed on that road, I gave less attention perhaps to the sale of the horses that brought me from London than I had done in regard to those which had carried me to Calais. At all events, I sold them immediately, for a mere trifle, at the little town of Dover, though I regretted afterwards that I had done so, when I found that there was no probability of a ship sailing for Calais for several days to come.

The next morning, however, I was awoke early by the news,

that a gentleman had just hired one of the small-decked vessels that frequent that port, to carry him across; and I instantly despatched the drawer, to inquire whether he was willing to give me a passage. The reply was courteous and kind, but accompanied with an injunction to make haste, as the tide was rising fast, and in twenty minutes the vessel would sail. Before I was dressed, the hirer of the boat was on board; and I was just in time to reach her side before she sailed.

My valise was instantly thrown in, and, followed by little Ball-o'-fire, I sprang up and reached the deck just as she began to move from the shore. What was my surprise, however, when advancing from behind the main sheet, which was now beginning to fill, Walter Dixon himself stood before me! Whether my own face exhibited as much surprise as his, I do not know; but I do not think it could have displayed very great calmness, or very great delight at his appearance; and we both instinctively laid our hands upon our swords. He recovered himself instantly, and, after looking at me with a smile for a full minute, during which he was doubtless laying out his plan of proceeding, he said,—

“So, Master Harry Masterton, in return for all the kind services that you have rendered me, I am to have the pleasure of carrying you to France in my vessel.”

“Rest quite assured, General Dixon,” I replied, “that had I known it to be yours, I should never have set foot upon its deck. Even now, were there any way of reaching the shore, I would remain no longer.”

“And why so, good youth?” he rejoined. “You are letting your passions get the better of your judgment, Master Harry, which is rather a fault of your family, let me tell you. Ay, even you yourself have it in no small degree, though you are a lad of sense, and have as much knowledge of the world—Heaven knows where you got it!—as would serve yourself and your brother too. But why give way to your passion, and quarrel with a good conveyance because Walter Dixon shares it?”

“Because,” I replied, “I should imagine that my society would be fully as disagreeable to him, as his is to me—without, indeed, he had some purpose to answer by consorting with me.”

“I have none that I know of at present,” he replied, coolly. “Perhaps I may think of some before the day be over, and then I shall use you as far as I can, of course. In the meantime, however, be assured that your society is not at all disagreeable to me; nor should mine be so to you, as, I think, when we can speak together alone, I shall be able to prove to you plainly.”

"I do not see how that can be," I replied. "There is still much that I cannot forget."

"But if I show you," he rejoined, "that in all which has passed I could not act otherwise than I did, with any regard to reason?"

"Still, sir, I cannot look with pleasure on a serpent, or a tiger," I replied, "though it be by instinct that they injure others."

"Indeed!" replied he, almost laughing. "There we do differ, certainly. I think a snake with his teeth drawn a very pretty beast; and a tiger in a cage is a pretty beast too. The only thing which can make anything appear hateful or ugly in my eyes, is its power of injuring me. Take that away, and everything is either pleasing or indifferent. Thus, you see, my charity extends a great deal farther than yours."

"It may do so," I replied; "but as I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing your charity produce any very good effects towards your fellow-creatures, you will excuse me for doubting its quality."

This kind of jarring conversation continued for some time longer; but still we did converse; and there was an easy sort of boldness about the man, with whom I was now forced into companionship, an odd mixture of good humoured frankness and impudent villany, that drove me from all the strongholds of reserve, and even anger, by which my mind was fortified against him. Gradually, from simply replying to his observations, or retorting somewhat rudely his sarcastic remarks, I was led on to more easy communion; and as we got farther to sea, and his servants with the sailors congregated in the bow of the vessel, we began to speak of the past events, in which we had both been engaged, without treating each other with any great ceremony, indeed, but without any expressions of great animosity.

Of his own actions, and his own principles, Walter Dixon spoke without the slightest reserve; and I could not help remembering and applying the words of Ireton, who had called him a *blunt hypocrite*—a term which had struck me at first as implying a contradiction, but which, the more I considered the conduct of the man before me, I found to be the only words which really characterised him.

"I never conceal anything," he said, while speaking of all that had passed—"I never conceal anything, when the affair is done and over. I am perfectly willing to tell every one concerned how such a thing happened, or why I acted in such a manner. I desire heartily that everybody with whom I am likely to come in contact should know my character thoroughly. It is like in fighting a duel, in which case my adversary has a just

right to know the arms which I oppose to him. If I do not beat him with them, it is my want of skill or courage; but I am never afraid of that."

"If such be the case, then, Master Walter Dixon," I rejoined, "probably you will have no objection to explain to me a few of the particulars concerning the affairs we have had together; for though I know the general facts pretty well, yet there are some of the minor details which puzzle me a good deal."

"Why," he replied, "the whole affair is not quite over yet; and there are some little secrets which I choose to keep in reserve; but I will tell you a great deal more than you do know; and perhaps you may find that you have come to wrong conclusions on many subjects. First, let me hear what you think you know. Then we shall see whether you are right."

He seemed not a little startled at hearing all I did know; and as I took good care to conceal the accident by which the greater part of my information was acquired, he replied, "You have either been dealing with the devil, or some one has betrayed me; and yet I know nobody who could do so, for some one took care to silence the person who might have told most. However, as you know so much, I will tell you something more. Come, sit down here on this chest, and I will while away the time with a tale.

"My mother was the only sister of Lord Ashkirk," he proceeded, in the tone of one about to begin a narrative of his whole life. "He was a poor peer; and she made a foolish marriage with an attorney, Walter Dixon, by whom she had an only son, called also, as you know, Walter Dixon. Lord Ashkirk, however, was shrewd, and a courtier, and a papist; and about eighteen years ago, amongst the courtly dissensions, which ushered in the reign, he contrived, with easy grace and faithful friendship, to betray his friend, who had been a little premature in taking advantage of this age's taste for high treason. His friend was tried, condemned, and his estates forfeited; and Lord Ashkirk found means to insinuate to the monarch, that the best reward for his important service, and the best compensation for the agonized feelings with which loyalty had compelled him to betray his friend, would be a grant of that friend's estates. The monarch viewed his piteous case in the same light that he did himself, granted him the estates, and instead of a poor peer, Lord Ashkirk was a rich one. As long as Lord Ashkirk was a poor peer, Walter Dixon the attorney, who was pretty well off in the world, and Walter Dixon's wife, had very little to do with Lord Ashkirk: but when Lord Ashkirk became a rich peer, it is wonderful what an affectionate brother and sister they showed themselves. Now, Lord Ashkirk's estates would cer-

tainly have made a very pleasant addition to the property of his next akin; but it unfortunately fell out, that the noble peer had one daughter, the Lady Eleanor Freerston; and, though there are various ways of poisoning rats, yet arsenic sprinkled on bread and butter had been of late so fertile in halters, that my father and mother would have nothing to do with it. They happily discovered, however, that first cousins might marry, even when one was a papist, by a dispensation; and consequently I was continually at the side of the Lady Eleanor, continually at the elbow of Lord Ashkirk. Under the counsels of my father, whose advice was somewhat bold, I plied my fair cousin with love in all forms; and found her perfectly willing that I, as well as every one else, should be her devoted slave; but when I went any farther and talked of private marriages, *et cætera*, she was as cold as ice, and as freezing as the north-east wind."

As he went on, Walter Dixon bit his lip, and I could see that he was more deeply moved by the things he spoke of than he desired to show. He proceeded, however, in a moment, as calmly as ever. "Well, finding that the young lady, who had seemed the easiest game, was in fact the most difficult, I turned to the old lord, whose faculties, thank God, were not quite so keen as they had been; and by dint of flattering, and coaxing, and keeping all others away from him as much as possible, I at length, in a moment of softness, made him promise me his daughter's hand. His daughter declared her obedience; and, the happiest man in the world, I set off to let my respectable parents know the success of our endeavours. Unfortunately, during my absence, two popish gentlemen, who had been travelling together in Italy—one, Sir Andrew Fleming; and the other, a Monsieur du Tillet, arrived at Penford-bourne, and you can guess the rest. Lord Ashkirk was a cavalier and a papist, and I was attached to the Parliament; but I had at best two thousand a year, and Sir Andrew Fleming had ten. He fell in love with the Lady Eleanor, and demanded her hand: the old peer had sometimes a short memory, and he forgot his promise to me. The young lady was still all obedience, and followed her father's example. The first news I heard was, that the Lady Eleanor Freerston had become Lady Eleanor Fleming; and I came back with all speed, not to vent my fury in empty words, but to revenge myself the best way I could, by rendering the knight as unhappy in his marriage, as he had rendered me by it. To my surprise, however, I found the post of lover filled also; and Du Tillet, as it appeared to me, doing his dear friend, Sir Andrew Fleming, the good service of making love to his young wife. Whether it was so or not, I will not now be quite sure. However,

I found that the marriage was likely to be as wretched as I could desire it. Sir Andrew was much older than his wife. Her heart went but little with the vow she pledged at the altar, and small was the harvest of love which the husband reaped from the unwilling wife. She was prodigal a little of her smiles to younger men—fond of adulation, flattery, and courtship; and beaming with beauty and with charms to every one but him who thought them his right. Those beams were indeed as the moon-beams, bright and cold; for she seemed to think a light laugh, or a dazzling smile, sufficient payment for the deepest love that man could show. I had not time indeed to try my power over her; for that Du Tillet, jealous, I believe, himself, took care to inflame the heart of his friend with the same feelings. Sir Andrew Fleming is one of the most deeply revengeful of men—almost as much so as myself. His jealousy excited him almost to insanity; but I was not a man to be turned from my path by any fears, and I measured blades secretly, both with Du Tillet and Sir Andrew Fleming. Slightly wounded by the one, I was afterwards stretched apparently lifeless on the greensward by the other. Their very success, however, promoted my designs. I was borne into the house, and so much kind tending did my fair cousin show, that her husband's wrath passed all bounds, threatened his intellect, and her life. It was found necessary to separate them; and Sir Andrew Fleming consented to relinquish the society of a woman whose coldness to himself but rendered her suavity to others the more terrible to his sight. But he did so alone upon the solemn promise from her father, that I should never more enter the doors of his dwelling, and from herself that she would never willingly see me again."

I listened attentively to Walter Dixon's account of himself; for the history of such a man's life could never be without its interest to one whose fate had been so materially influenced by his agency. I could not exactly see, however, how the long story he was telling affected the questions which I wanted resolved; and it is probable, that some such feelings betrayed themselves in my countenance, for he proceeded, "I see you do not comprehend to what this tale points; or rather, like all other men, you are thinking, at every word I utter, how far it is relative to yourself. Well, you shall soon see. I did not *vow* revenge, as people call it; for those who take the trouble of vowing anything, are very sure at the moment they do vow, that a time will come when their feelings will have changed, and that a vow may be necessary to steady their purpose. No, no, I did not vow revenge; but I resolved upon it, without a doubt of ever losing the desire. How far I followed it, and what success I have hitherto had, is

another question, on which there is no need to speak. But at the same time that I took that resolve, I took another, which I have pursued as keenly, and that was, to find means, in the course of events, to make that property mine, which the marriage of my promised wife to another had torn from me. I determined that it should be so ! and depend upon it, that if a man fixes his eyes steadfastly on one particular object in life, bends all his efforts and his thoughts to its attainment, never suffers himself, either to be diverted by other pursuits, or rebuffed by difficulties, or scared by dangers, or stopped by those phantoms of the imagination with which nurses and priests fill the weak ears of children—depend upon it, I say, there are a thousand chances to one that he accomplishes his design. The times, too, were the most fortunate that could have happened for the attainment of my object. The civil war was shaking all the foundations of society ; men's minds became thirsty for new changes and new notions ; and there was no saying what transfer of property might take place, when all old rights were annulled. I eagerly embarked in the strife ; of course, amongst the advocates of change, each of whom was following his own particular purpose exactly as I was following mine : each of whom—covered under what pretence he would—strove for some private and selfish object ; either wealth, power, fame, ambition, or, worst of all, fanaticism ; as certainly as Walter Dixon, or the noblest cavalier among your chivalrous party. *We were* all selfish alike—we *are* all selfish alike—we *shall be* all selfish alike to the end of the world. However, we did not all pursue our path with the same steady footsteps. I went on in the service, distinguished myself, as people term it ; fought hard and well, and became Captain, Colonel, General Dixon ; but still my object was the rich lands and estates of Penford-bourne. I canted with the fanatics, I harangued with the levellers, I raved with the fifth-monarchy men, but still my object was Penford-bourne. If I was successful in any attempt, the reward I required was that. If any accident happened to me, I strove so to turn it that it might bring me nearer that goal. In the meantime, my father, and mother, and uncle all died ; and a clerk of my father's took to serve in the army under me. He was clever, brave, villanous, and hypocritical, in a higher degree than most men ; and having caught Lord Fairfax's attention, he was taken by him as a valet ; on which occasion, wanting money, he plundered the good Presbyterian of all his moveable cash, and laid the blame upon a party of the enemy. I detected him, but instead of betraying poor Matthew Hutchinson, as some might have been foolish enough to do, I lauded his skill and ability, but only advised him to quit the service of the good Lord Fair-

fax. This he did; and received a high recommendation from that worthy General to your father, under the name of Gabriel Jones.

“On my visit to Exeter, when first I met you, I discovered from my good cousin, Habacuc Grimstone, all that passed in your neighbourhood; and having opened a communication with Gabriel Jones, I soon discovered that you were not all as pacific as you seemed. The levying of your forces was indeed well concealed; but at length I discovered it, and magnifying the extent of your power, communicated it to the Council of State. The whole country was in a state of anarchy; Cromwell was marching for Wales; Fairfax and Skippon had Goring, and Capel, and Hales, and Lucas, and Lisle about their ears; and had nearly lost their wits with fright, when they heard of new force marching from Devonshire. I took good care that you should meet with no opposition; for it was a part of my policy to frighten them all as much as possible; and every movement made to stop you, was instantly told to Gabriel Jones, and from him to your brother. At length I offered to delay your march by stratagem, if Fairfax and the rest would promise me Penford-bourne; and my plan was laid, to prove its mistress a rank malignant, and so give good excuse for forfeiture, while at the same time I made use of her as the means of deserving the reward, by staying your march. All that the Generals could do was to promise their influence; but I thought that would be enough, and I joined you at Amesbury, as you remember, kept you clear of Hornsby’s forces, and piloted you safe to Penford-bourne. There I gave timely notice to the fair dame of your arrival, conveyed to you plenty of false intelligence about the position of the forces, stopped your messengers to Lord Goring; and, in short, delayed you till the Royalists were attacked at Wrotham——”

“But tell me,” I interrupted; “did I, or did I not hear that accursed villain, Jones, conversing with some one called Avery, in the ruins of the old castle above Penford-bourne?”

“You heard him conversing with me,” replied Walter Dixon, “and the name of Avery was that under which I lay concealed at Exeter. A hearty fright you gave us; but Hutchinson soon made his way back to the manor by the old private path, which I had shown him; and I lay concealed in the vaults till your troopers were gone. I gave your brother a worse alarm than that, though,” he continued, “on that very night, when one of your messengers that I had safely imprisoned, as I thought, made his escape, and returned to your quarters. I met the worthy lover wandering by night in the park, and musing by the melancholy moon. He saw a stranger, though I fled fast

enough, my business being with Gabriel Jones, not him. He then pursued me sword in hand, when suddenly I disappeared amongst the old cells, leaving him to think he had seen a ghost. However, my plans, as you know, succeeded well : and by one witchery or another, he was kept sufficiently long for Fairfax to have beaten Goring ten times over, if he had had any activity. Well, after that——”

“But tell me,” I said, again breaking in upon the course of his story, “who was the man—for you of course know—by whose hand my brother had so near died on the morning of our march for Maidstone?”

“Did your brother never tell you?” demanded the other, in some surprise.

“Never,” I replied. “I never asked him directly, it is true ; but I did all but ask him, and he showed no disposition to give me any information on the subject.”

“Nor will I then, either,” said Walter Dixon. “That business is not yet ended ; and I do not know what it may produce ; therefore the least said on it the better.”

“It could not be yourself with whom he fought,” I rejoined, “for you were then in safe custody at the village.”

“No, no ! it was not with me,” replied the other ; and then, after musing a moment, he demanded, “Is your brother a good swordsman ?”

“The best I ever saw,” I replied ; at which he looked up eagerly, demanding, “Then why did he not kill him ?”

“His foot slipped, I believe,” I answered ; “but never on the greensward or in the fencing-room did I see a better swordsman than Frank Masterton.”

“Indeed !” he said eagerly, “indeed !” and then seeing me somewhat surprised at the interest he seemed to take in a matter of little concern to him, he added, abruptly, “How infernally these little vessels pitch ! But to go on with my story.”

“But stay, Master Dixon,” I said—“Why do you wish so particularly to know my brother’s skill in fencing ?—You ask curiously on the matter.”

“I may wish to know whether he is a man to be quarrelled with or not,” replied the other, with a grim smile, that announced his words to be one of those excuses, to which we cannot well refuse currency, although we do not believe a word of them.

“But to go on with my story,” continued Walter Dixon. “When the whole was over, the Council of State found some specious excuse to refuse me the estates. What could I think ? I fancied that the fair Lady Eleanor had some special friends amongst them ; and I remembered that Ireton, General Cromwell’s son-in-law, had once been nobly entertained at Penford-

bourne. Half out of my senses with anger, I went down into Kent again, to catechise the lady herself. I found her in despair about your brother—a woman who, I had imagined, could love no earthly thing but her fair self, was mad with love of a raw boy from the heart of Devonshire. As I had served her once or twice in days of old, and she knew that what I undertook I would carry through, she prayed my help, as soon as she found that I had discovered how her heart stood. Our plan was soon laid; I perceived that she was willing to sacrifice everything for him; and that he was willing to resign home, and family, and friends for her. Under such circumstances, there was little difficulty; and I easily made my arrangements to gratify the loving turtles, by the same means that conveyed me the estate. I am always willing to do any good turn that may fall in my way; but in the present instance, there was a little spice of revengeful pleasure in the thought of seeing a woman who had trifled with my love, and sported with the passion of a thousand others, willingly like a moth burn her wings in the flame round which she played. To see her sacrifice virtue, reputation, fortune, and all the home luxuries she had been accustomed to from infancy, for—love! simple, blind, passionate, headstrong, absurd love! Then again, when I thought of the effect it would have upon that deep-passioned, insane wretch, Fleming, when he heard that his lovely wife, in whose every action—notwithstanding all that had passed, notwithstanding that to him she was as one dead—in whose every action he felt a profound and maddening interest, when he heard that she had blasted her own name and honour by going off with your brother!”

“Very pleasant anticipations, indeed, Master Dixon!” I replied, as he paused for a moment in his recital, to contemplate the picture of vengeance he had raised up before his own eyes. “Very pleasant anticipations, indeed! but not very holy ones.”

“Holy!” he exclaimed, with a bitter sneer. “There are but two things on earth, young man, that can gratify a strong heart, or a strong head—interest or revenge; and in what I proposed, they were both combined; for the moment that the Lady Eleanor Fleming had fled the country with a known malignant, her estates could not be well refused, I thought, to one who had so well deserved them as I had. Accordingly, Hutchinson, or Gabriel Jones, as you call him, was brought in play; and while he carried to and from Exeter sundry sweet love epistles for your brother, he bore intelligence for me of all that passed within the walls of Masterton House. I received at length copies of the replies of all the cavaliers invited to your brother’s wedding. I denounced the proposed assembly to the Council

of State, as a royalist meeting for raising the whole of Devonshire, gained a warrant for the arrest of all the party, and set off post haste to execute it myself. I need hardly tell you the rest. My idiot cousin, Habacuc Grimstone, detained us till we were nearly too late, in order to sing a psalm at Exeter. As you know, however, we arrived in time."

"And may I ask," I demanded, "what was the temptation to Master Gabriel Jones, so systematically to betray a family in which he had been used so kindly?"

"Oh, like a wise man, he never acted without two or three strong motives," replied Walter Dixon. "In the first place, he coveted sundry services of gold and silver, which were to be his part of the spoil of the Egyptians; also a small estate in Dorsetshire, belonging to the Lords Masterton, which I promised my best efforts to obtain for him. Then he had a sweet and pious hankering after the charms of the bride—Do not look so furious, Master Harry! Depend upon it, a valet-de-chambre has as good right to covet his master's bride, as a younger to covet his elder brother's. But the strongest and most unchangeable motive of Gabriel Jones to hate and destroy your family was, that you were malignants—that you were of a different creed from himself. He could pardon those who were of no religion at all, or any that suited the time, like myself; but he could not pardon those who were the opponents of his own sect; and he would have destroyed you all, root and branch, if his good will had had its way. His commanding without any right or reason the men to fire, when they were too willing to obey, was proof enough of his hatred. If some one had not shot him in the scuffle, I believe I should have shot him myself, for involving us all in such an affray. And now have you anything more to ask, for I am as frank and free as the day, and will tell you candidly, what I tell you at all?"

"There is a great deal more yet, Master Dixon," I replied. "In the first place, pray why did you pursue me so fiercely, when, in fact, my brother was the only person you wanted of the whole?"

"Because your name was in the warrant," he answered; "and I was obliged, at all events, to seem to do my duty. Besides, I longed very much to repay you a kind imprisonment to which you subjected me in Kent; and I am one of those who always like to give back interest along with the principal sum. Is there anything more?"

"You have not yet told me the ultimate fate of my brother," I replied.

"Oh! I thought you must have heard all that in London," answered Walter Dixon. "He contrived to effect his escape by

the means of the Lady Eleanor Fleming, whose handiwork I took care should be sufficiently apparent in the whole business. When last I left them, they were cooing like turtle-doves; but the news of your father's death reached him, I hear, afterwards, for he had not seen him fall. Those tidings saddened him, they say, a great deal, and I did not see him again before they set out together for France. The rest of the cavaliers who were taken, easily proved that they were merely invited to a wedding, and will get free with a little fine and imprisonment. I am the worst off of all; for after having laboured for the State as boldly and as busily as most, I am still denied my reward, because Fleming happens to be protected by Mazarin."

"What, then, is your purpose, now?" I demanded, innocently enough.

"Nay, nay, Master Henry, your pardon there," replied my companion. "The past is the property of every one—the future is my own. I care not who knows what I have done—but I do not love that people should know what I may do. Some people call me a hypocrite, but they do so falsely—I am quite willing that all the world should know——"

"Everything but what you choose to conceal," I rejoined.

"True," he replied; "but my character, and the principles on which I act—I make no concealment there—I deceive no one in regard to them."

"Is it not for the purpose of deceiving them more successfully in after things?" I demanded.

"How so?" he said.

"By throwing them off their guard by general candour, till they take the individual deceit you wish, as matter of fact, too," I replied: "just as you must have seen an artful fencer, Master Dixon, lunge loose sometimes, till by a close feint he hits his antagonist on the heart."

He paused, musing for a moment, and then replied, coolly, "Perhaps it may be so—the sea is getting calmer."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THERE are some men who, sooner than not talk of themselves at all, would talk of their own shame; and Walter Dixon might possibly be one of these. Nevertheless, I think that he had deeper motives; and he was deceived, if, as I believe, he sought by the bold sketch of his own character, which he had just given, to make me his dupe in other respects. I certainly never

doubted that he was fully as bad, remorseless, and artful as he had pictured himself—and that was surely bad enough. But I did not give him the least credit for the candour he assumed. I concluded that it was entirely a piece of acting, and as pure hypocrisy as the religion of the fifth-monarchy men.

Doubtless, he had in some degree painted his character as it really was; but then he knew that I had previously formed my own appreciation of it much in the same manner; and he risked little in acknowledging qualities which I already attributed to him. At the same time it is to be remarked, that all the principal facts which he narrated I before knew, or must soon have learned; and that the evil qualities which he owned, such as selfishness, cunning, and revenge, he looked upon as virtues, when joined with courage, perseverance, and skill, though I regarded them as vices under any combination.

On the whole, therefore, he made a great display of candour at a small cost. But if he did it purposely to throw me off my guard, an opinion which after circumstances confirmed, he was very much mistaken. Not that I ever proposed to compete in cunning and policy with a man whose whole life had been expended in following the narrow and tortuous paths of deceit; but I resolved carefully to avoid him, as I would some loathsome animal; not alone from the hatred I bore him, as the active agent in the infinite evils which had already befallen my family, but as a dangerous and uncertain companion, on whose conduct I could never count with security either in good or evil. The first of these feelings, nevertheless, I could hardly subdue, although I felt that I could not seek a personal quarrel with a man, because he had injured me in the service of another party to which he belonged; but, I believe, it was the evident and un concealed selfishness of his views, even in the service of that other party, which made me far more rancorous in my abhorrence of him than I felt towards Fairfax, Ireton, Cromwell, or any other of the Parliamentary leaders, who had done far more injury to my country or myself than he had.

Even Habacuc Grimstone, who had used every means in his small power to effect the ruin of my family, I viewed with less individual antipathy than I did Walter Dixon; and although my life had grown into more consequence in my eyes since the love of Emily Langleigh had given new value to existence, I would willingly have crossed swords with him, if he had afforded me any fair excuse of rendering our quarrel personal. He took care not to do so, however; for though he was, I believe, totally without fear, yet he looked upon life as the means of accomplishing his purposes and enjoying his desires—and he took as much care of it as of any other valuable property.

When I had embarked for France, on board the same vessel with Walter Dixon, I had contemplated proceeding at once to Paris, for the purpose of tracing my brother; but as I found, from some casual words that fell from my Parliamentarian, that I should have the same unwished-for companion all along the road to the capital, I determined to return to Brittany at once, and thence conduct Emily and Lady Margaret to the French metropolis.

This change of purpose I took care, however, to conceal; and we landed at Calais, with the apparent design of both proceeding to Paris the next morning. I nevertheless sauntered out into the town before I went to bed, and found my two Brittany horses still in the hands of the *maquignon* to whom I had sold them. A small advance of price soon made them mine once more; and before it was daylight next morning, I descended to the *salle à manger*, where I was despatching a rapid breakfast in the full expectation of bidding adieu to Master Dixon for ever, as I believed him to be too devoted a voluptuary to quit his bed before high noon—when, to my astonishment, he entered the same apartment, and seated himself opposite to me.

“I remembered you were an early riser,” he said—demanding his breakfast at the same time, without any other comment on my purpose of setting out without him—“I remembered you were an early riser, and therefore rose just three hours before my time.”

As far as Abbeville our roads lay together, and, therefore, as it did not suit me to explain either the object or the direction of my journey, I determined to let him accompany me so far; and once there, to quit him either openly or secretly, as I found most convenient. On mounting our horses, I was somewhat surprised to find that he journeyed on alone; and seeing my astonishment, as he was a great interpreter of looks, he replied at once to my thoughts, by saying—“They” (meaning his servants)—“they follow in an hour or two. Your rapid movements have thrown their preparations behindhand.”

We now rode on upon our way with tolerable good humour on both parts. The horse, which he also had bought while we were at Calais, was a more showy beast than either of mine, but not near so strong; and he proceeded slowly, in order to spare its strength. As if by mutual consent, we avoided all allusion to the subjects which had rendered our conversation of the day before painful, though interesting; and I amused myself with tracing, as we went forward, the workings of his dark and subtle mind, which regarded everything that we saw, whether it was a beautiful scene, or a fleeting cloud, or a group

of peasants at a cabaret, with a strange reference to himself. It seemed as if nature had given him a power, in passing through the universe in which she had cast him, to extract in an instant, from every object of every kind, its relationship to his own interests, or his own wishes, or his own enjoyments. Self, in his nature, was not, as in that of other men, the predominant principle; but it was the absorbing whole—and I verily believe that he never wasted a thought upon anything but inasmuch as it affected self.

Not long after passing Marquise, just as we had mounted the little hill, and were riding leisurely onward, a traveller who had taken the post, and was galloping along with his postilion at a great rate, rode by us, scarcely pausing to give us a passing salute.

“That is a fellow of Hyde’s,” cried Walter Dixon, as he passed. “Perhaps we might get some tidings from him, if we could catch him;” and, setting spurs to his horse, he rode after the traveller as fast as possible.

On the other side of the hill is a deep sort of wooded glen, where four valleys meet, with a little stream running through it; and at the bifurcation of the road, which here branches into two, is planted a little drinking-house, where the postilions stop to breathe their horses, and take their stated portion of strong waters. We had seen the traveller and his companion go over the hill, and into the valley; but, on looking down from the top of the rise, we could descry no traces of them. Their horses were not, as we might have expected, standing at the door of the little cabaret; and we rode down, passed the inn-window—from which a woman’s face was gazing at us—and taking the road that, winding through the wood, had been hidden from us as we stood above, proceeded quickly on our way.

Suddenly, however, General Dixon pulled in his rein. “We may be wrong yet,” said he. “Have you any objection to turn back, and ask at that cabaret which is our right way?”

“None in the world,” I answered; “and the more readily, because I thought I heard a distant cry for help.”

We were not more than three hundred yards from the place, and turning at once, we galloped back towards it. Another cry met our ears just as we drew the rein; and as we came nearer, loud sounds of expostulation and entreaty were heard distinctly, proceeding from the open windows of the cabaret. Before exactly quitting the shelter of the wood, we dismounted, and tying our horses to the trees, walked on as quickly as possible, while the sounds of lamentation, and sorrow, and terror, became more and more loud each moment. We had heard many a report of robbers on the way, while we were at Calais; and

those sounds immediately led us to conclusions which required no verbal communication to show each of us what his companion was thinking of. We looked in each other's faces, and that was quite enough.

"They are murdering that poor devil of Hyde's," whispered Walter Dixon, at length: "I know his voice:—what shall we do? Shall we lay on, a' God's name, as Habacuc would say, and take the chance of the odds? or shall we mind the good old rule, and keep our own fingers out of the fire?"

"Lay on, in God's name," replied I; "we are both well armed, and two strong men. The postilion will make a third."

"The postilion!" exclaimed he, with a sneer, which was fully justified afterwards. "The postilion!—but never mind—on, on, good Master Harry! and I will back you without flinching—on my soul—the servants will soon be here too, and here is your boy, as good as half-a-dozen." As he spoke, he pushed me forward to the door, which was open, and advancing along a narrow passage, as silently as possible, I came to a smaller door on the left hand, from which abundance of doleful sounds were proceeding.

"I have nothing more! indeed, I have nothing more!" cried a voice from within, in execrable bad French and a strong English tone. "Search me as much as you like, but spare my life, gentlemen!"

A thunder of mixed French and English oaths followed, while a female tongue was heard exclaiming, with much of the precision of a cuckoo clock, and about the same degree of feeling, "*Mon Dieu, c'est terrible! Bon Dieu, c'est abominable! Messieurs! Messieurs, ayez pitié, je vous en prie—je vous conjure! Mon Dieu! Bon Dieu!*" &c. &c.

As she spoke, I pushed open the door, and a scene presented itself, which had something in it both shocking and ludicrous. The room was evidently the common room of a cabaret, and on a table, in one corner, stood glasses and bottles, and all the instruments for quenching thirst. The middle of the chamber, however, was quite cleared, as if to give a fair arena, which appeared unincumbered by any furniture but one chair, that lay overthrown on the ground, supporting the head of the traveller who had passed us, as two stout men held him down, one of whom was busily rifling his person, while the other calmly held a pistol to his head. Close by, with a rope in her hand—as if either to remind the two active personages on the stage, of the usual end of their doings, or to assist in binding the hands of the more passive of the performers—stood the mistress of the house, whose face we had seen watching us through the window

as we passed the inn at first. This good lady's appearance was anything but prepossessing, though it certainly bore the marks of jaded beauty, the fair traces of which were almost worn out by many a vice besides drunkenness. I think I never in my life beheld a more complete picture of apathy than her countenance presented, while standing by, with the rope in her hand, she uttered, by rote, the words which I have mentioned.

The man who presented the pistol was a tall, long-bearded gentleman, whose features were not bad, but whose face, and person altogether, presented that strange, unhappy look, which is only given by thorough debauchery. There was in it, too, the air of careless frivolity, so much assumed by the English cavaliers; and he held the murderous weapon to his victim's head, as a fop might hold a pouncet-box. His dress had once been handsome, and its good fashion made it, at first sight, appear strange in such a scene, till the eye detected some rather anomalous patchings and darnings; which, like a forced simile patched on a good piece of eloquence, only served to show where the original foundation was somewhat ragged.

Before they were aware of our presence, we caught a part of their brief colloquy. "What does she say?" demanded the man who was rifling the fallen traveller, alluding to something the woman whispered to the other, just as we entered.

"Damn the ——," replied the pistol-bearer in English; "she asks why we do not shoot him, to make all safe."

"The best way, too!" grumbled the other; but, at that moment, a loud scream from the lady of the house, who at the same instant dropped the rope, and clasped her hands in an attitude of interesting surprise, announced to her companions the presence of unexpected witnesses; and, starting from their less important avocation, they faced us at once, while pistols were levelled and swords drawn on both sides. The traveller started from the floor, and armed himself suddenly with a chair, for his sword had been taken from him; the woman screamed aloud; the worthy plunderers shouted threats against the *Matin de Postillon*, who, as they thought, had betrayed them; and what would have followed I do not know, had not Walter Dixon suddenly dropped the muzzle of his pistol, and casting himself into one of the chairs by the window, burst into a loud and uncontrollable fit of laughter.

The sounds of mirth, at such a moment, had the exact reverse effect of Orpheus' lyre; and every one, instead of dancing, stood stock still, gazing on the person who could find matter for merriment in so serious a scene. Still, however, Walter Dixon laughed on; and in a moment or two afterwards I thought I began to see the brow of the pistol-bearing gentleman smooth

a little down, and a sort of faint grin of recognition come over his countenance.

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Walter Dixon; "Ha, ha, ha! good Master Daintree! dearly beloved Master Daintree! what, have three short years brought thee to this summary mode of recruiting the exchequer? Ha, ha, ha! But still thou art right! Stand and deliver! is thy trade, take my word for it. Thou art too hasty to win a fortune by the ivory islands, surrounded by their sea of leather. Forswear the dice-box, Master Daintree, and look well to the priming, and thou mayst yet be a great man, and reach an elevated station. Ha, ha, ha! Mind you that night, when we ——"

"Not a word of that, sir!" cried the other, colouring, till his bronzed cheek grew of the hue of a horn lantern newly lighted; "not a word of that, sir, I say!"

But still Walter Dixon laughed on. "Ha, ha, ha! That worthy," he cried, turning to me, "that worthy, with the pistol in his hand and the ominous countenance, as if he would shoot me in the middle of my tale—that worthy, some five years ago, was a gay and ruffling cavalier, who made himself fine in doublets that he had not paid for, and drunk with wine that other folks supplied; when, lo and behold, suddenly finding himself hard pressed for cash, too well known to find lenders; and there being none in the royal camp from whom he could steal, he puts on a sober look and a sour suit, and comes up to London to find some weak brother of the Independent creed, who was given to the carnal abomination of gaming. There he met with one Walter Dixon, for whom he did some good services in a bold way, and having found some birds he deemed he could gull, he set to work in hopeful style, lost a few pieces, won a few more; but greediness forgot caution—he got on too quick—was detected, and—shall I tell the rest?"

"But no," he added, after a moment's pause. Whether he saw anything dangerous in the fellow's face or not, I cannot tell. "But no," he added, "we will not mind the rest; and now, good Master Daintree, I am sorry to spoil your sport; but you have got all you can from this worthy person, who handles the chair he has in his hand, like Hercules his club, and you must let me have a few words with him. I may have some occupation for you myself."

"Oh, certainly, Master Dixon," replied the other, "certainly! Zounds, speak your fill to him. Every man should have time to speak, whether he is to die or live."

Walter Dixon now accordingly advanced to the poor traveller, who had stood by, listening to all that had passed, with little participation in the jocularity which my excellent com-

panion had evinced, but expecting every minute to hear something which might decide his fate. He then spoke to him for a few minutes, in a whisper, though what he learned or sought to learn I never discovered. In the meanwhile, the two thieves conversed also in an under voice, and it seemed to me that they were consulting as to the propriety of making their escape as fast as possible. Probably the position which I maintained near the door decided them to remain, for, after a moment, they became silent again, and turned their eyes towards the other two. The traveller, whoever he was, seemed in no mood to refuse any information; and, after some brief questions, General Dixon turned to the others, saying, "Now, good Master Daintree, you must let this gentleman go."

"No, d— me if he shall," cried the one who, when we entered, had been holding the traveller down, "not till I see what he has in that other pouch of his."

"He shall not?" asked Walter Dixon, whose eye I had seen glance twice towards the window, "he shall not, did you say?" and he calmly cocked the pistol he had in his hand.

"No, he shall not!" said the other dogged villain, who, it now appeared, was an Englishman also; and, indeed, it was unhappily too frequent at that time to see our countrymen in the capacity in which these two appeared, especially on the roads in the immediate neighbourhood of the French coast; which many of them reached, after bearing a share in the civil wars, perfectly destitute in circumstances, and hardened by long familiarity with scenes of bloodshed, vice, and improvidence.

"No, he shall not, I say!" reiterated the desperado; but, at that moment, there was the sound of several horses on the road, and Walter Dixon, leaning towards the window, exclaimed, "Halt there, without! Now, sir!" he added, turning to the other, "without any wish to interfere with the execution of your very honourable calling, I have only to say to you, that you have had this worthy personage for at least five minutes at your clear disposal—a space of time quite as long as any reasonable man could desire to have his hands in another man's pockets. There are my servants, as you may see, four in number, and I have only to tell you, that you must, without another word, suffer this gentleman to walk out of the door, mount his horse, and ride on with the honest postilion who brought him here—and who can call for his share as he comes back—or I must mount you and your friend (and my friend also) Monsieur Daintree, behind one of my fellows, and carry you into Abbeville, as the prelude to a farther journey by a speedier conveyance."

Such an appeal was not to be resisted. The man acquiesced with dogged sullenness: but Master Daintree, who seemed to have every reliance upon Walter Dixon's secrecy and friendship, acted as mediator upon the occasion, introduced his friend Captain Wighton, whom the worthy General received with mock ceremony and politeness, and then ushering forth the unhappy traveller, whispered a warning in his ear, well calculated to make him silent for some miles at least.

I am afraid, however, that other means were resorted to for the purpose of insuring his discretion in regard to what had occurred to him on the road, for I never could hear that he reached his destination. It is not unlikely, indeed, that the postilion's fears might prove even more dangerous to him than those of the robbers. But to return to ourselves—Walter Dixon seemed to feel astonishingly little horror or detestation at the trade of the two ruffians who remained beside us; and assuring them that Paris was the only place for men of their talents to thrive, he desired to see them if they journeyed thitherward, and gave them the means of finding him when they came.

We then mounted our horses and rode away, and as we proceeded, I could not forbear commenting on his behaviour. He replied only with his usual sneering laugh.

"By my faith!" said he, "that is always the way with you cavaliers. You are less charitable to your own party than we Parliamentarians are. Now those two men are both of them as excellent royalists as ever lived. Nay, you need not turn so red, Master Harry Masterton. I said not all cavaliers are thieves, though some thieves are cavaliers. One of those men I know to be a cavalier—that Master Daintree. He had once a little property; was a reckless, bold boy; grew up a reckless, brave man, and as honourable as all men are, till they want money. Soon, however, he got poor; and drank a little, as the best comfort in poverty, and gambled a little, as the best remedy. All was fair at first, but somehow, between drinking and gambling, a man soon begins to see a little confusedly in matters of honour, and to risk somewhat more than his money upon the game. Daintree got blasted in the royal army, and then because he had pigeoned a few fools of thick-headed cavaliers, he thought he could cope with Presbyterians and Independents. With this view he stayed about six months in London, where he did me a few of those little services that I needed in various ways; and the last time I saw him was in a house where he was acting the part of football to about twenty very godly feet, the heads belonging to which he had foolishly thought it within his poor capacity to cheat. He called lustily for my help, which I

afforded him by adding the last kick, that sent him rolling out into the street, and I have never seen him since till this day."

With various anecdotes of such persons and their manifold plans of proceeding, Walter Dixon amused the way, and nothing afterwards happened on our journey to Abbeville which is worth recording. At that town I found it easier to quit my companion, without either explanation or discussion, than I expected. We arrived towards night, and declaring that he had not had one fair night's rest since we had travelled together, Walter Dixon announced his intention of sleeping for two hours longer the following day than he usually had done, especially as our horses were somewhat fatigued with our last day's journey. I rose very early, however, and broke my fast with all calmness. Little Ball-o'-fire was never behind, and hiring a flat-bottomed boat to carry us across the river, we soon put the Somme between us and our unsafe companion, and as the sun rose high, were once more on horseback, and again wending gladly onward towards Dinan.

I know few feelings on earth half so joyful as that with which one sets out to rejoin a person one loves, after a brief absence. It is Hope's own pilgrimage; and never did I feel the influence of life's fairy guide more sweetly, than on that journey into Brittany. Oh, how she made all the world smile around me, as I thought of Emily Langleigh! nor was it a slight pleasure to be freed from Walton Dixon. His presence had sat upon the happiness of my return like an incubus; and the pleasant and honourable friends he had recognised on the road, had not served to make his company less oppressive. Freed from him, I now seemed to breathe more easily; there was a load off my breast, and the prospect of the rest of my journey was all delight. The weather, indeed, was beginning to be broken, and many an autumnal shower drenched me to the skin, as it flew over my head, on the wings of the swift equinox. I heeded them but little, however, and journeyed on from day to day, with a glad heart at the diminished distance. It is true, at times, as I stood upon some high hill and cast my eyes over the wide woods, covered with the dying hues of autumn, and waving in the melancholy wind, vague shadows of my own mortality would seem to float across the sunshine of my mind; and, without knowing why, I would shrink at the mystery of being, and the strange obscure relationship between myself and all around me, with my flesh of dust and withered leaves, and my spirit all unknown and mysterious even to itself.

Such fits forced themselves on me but seldom, and were the fruit of the silence in which I proceeded; for my little page,

with all the activity and eagerness of his age, had none of its loquacity; and though anxious to learn and comprehend everything as we passed on, a few brief words ever sufficed him, to ask his question or to make his observation.

About the eighth day of my journey, I began to feel impatient. I had been rather indulging, too, in a fit of gloom, when I was tempted to commit one of the greatest follies that a human being can practise—namely, to take a short cut.

The person who seduced me into this path was an old woman, of whom I asked the way; and who told the straight road, too, but at the same time she assured me the cross road was a good hour shorter. We were at that moment on the top of a height, which commanded the greater part of the country round: and I could see the spires of the town to which I was going, rising in the grey evening, out of the trees in the far distance. I have often thought since, how often man in his journey through life, whether he be the private individual plodding on his own way, or the minister guiding forward the wild and stubborn horses of national policy; how often in his journey through life he is tempted in the same way to the same folly. He stands for a moment on a spot from whence he can see laid out, as on a map, a thousand various paths wandering through the land before him. He quits the high road, long and tedious as it seems, and beaten by the feet of thousands; and takes what seems the short and direct way to his object, as it lies before him distinct in the distant prospect; but as he descends from the eminence, his general view gets lost and perplexed; he finds the by-road rough, tortuous, hilly, perhaps impassable; others spread out from it on either side, so like itself, he knows not which is the right; he wastes his time in conjecture; chooses the wrong, and gets more and more entangled, till weary, late, and exhausted, some charitable hand leads him back to that same high road which he quitted so much in vain.

The straight road and the short cut, indeed, were both before my eyes, and the fault was all my own; but the wind rushed loud and chill, it was growing late, and gathered all round the dim sky were mountainous masses of dull leaden clouds, threatening to pour an absolute deluge on the earth, as soon as the sun should go down. Everything, even to the faint white glare of the heaven, over which a gauze of mist was drawn, counselled speed; and I was foolishly induced, as I have before said, to take the short cut.

I soon discovered that the road, which was good enough at the beginning, got very bad before it reached the middle; and as it entered a forest on its way, the deep and uncertain ruts,

left by the wood carts, and filled with water by the late showers, nearly broke my horse's legs if I attempted to go fast. In the meantime, the light waxed grey and more grey, and the melancholy whistling of the wind amongst the tall tree-tops, reminded me how soon those clouds must come up, which I had seen gathering on the horizon; while the dull splashing of our horses' feet, in the deep channels and puddles of the way, commented sadly on what we were to expect, and upbraided me at every step for my folly in taking the short cut.

Nothing could be done, however, but to ride on; and ride on we did, as fast as it was possible, eyeing wistfully, every two or three hundred yards, some of the long avenues of the forest, and wondering whether we might not there find a better road. Every instant as it passed, took away some portion of light; and the clouds, which now came rolling over our heads, added to the natural darkness of the hour. The incessant roar of the equinoctial gale, through the tall thin birches that now filled up the centre of the forest, began to be mingled with the pattering of the rain; and, drenched without remedy, we rode on, with our boots full of water, and the gusts of wind driving fresh torrents continually into our faces.

It did not long continue evening. No blessed twilight intervened; and all was darkness, so dark, indeed, that I could not see the horse I sat upon. Trusting to the animal's instinct, I gave it the bridle; but it seemed to have as much difficulty in seeing its way, as I had in guiding it; and cautiously picking its steps along the swampy ground, it carried me at about a mile by the hour, beaten by the hurricane and drenched by the deluge that was falling from the sky.

This was not to be endured for long; and at length using whip and spur, I forced the beast on, though both of us pursued our course in utter blindness. Shortly after, I found myself rising, as the horse's fore-feet mounted a hill, and the next moment a severe blow on the knee showed me that I had run against either a tree or a post. Little Ball-o'-fire coming up, we examined with our hands what we could not discern with our eyes, and found that the object which had stopped me, and occasioned me no small pain, was a finger-post in the midst of one of the cross roads, raised on a little mound of turf.

Of no earthly use was it in our present circumstances; and, indeed, it served a purpose for which it was certainly not intended, that of making us lose our way still farther; for in going round it, to ascertain what it was, we missed the direction in which our horses' heads had been first turned, and which was probably the right one. We were now obliged to trust to chance entirely for our farther guidance; and resuming the slow pace

which I had quitted to little purpose, I followed the first path which the horse chose for itself; and after wending slowly forward for nearly another hour, I perceived by a slight increase of light, that we had emerged from the forest. Little advantage, however, did we derive from this circumstance, for though I could see my hand when I held it up, I could not see an inch of the road over which I was travelling; and we were now a thousand-fold more exposed to the drifting rain and the wind, which nearly drove us off our horses.

Thus, chilled to the heart, dripping, tired, and miserable, we proceeded for another hour, with the darkness waxing and waning, according to the different opacity of the clouds that were driven fiercely over the sky. At length my eye caught a light at some distance, gleaming faintly through the loaded air. A moment after we lost it again, as we passed some low wood; but it speedily re-appeared, and alternately catching it, twinkling in the distance, and missing it altogether, we rode on till it began certainly to grow nearer and more distinct. After a time, however, we again lost sight of it; and I was pushing forward in hopes of regaining it, when my horse showed a most stubborn inclination to turn to the right, and as it was the first time throughout the whole journey that I had found him steady in maintaining his own opinion, I gave him his way. I soon found that he was carrying me up a long avenue of trees; and the voluntary acceleration of his pace gave strong evidence that he at least perceived he was approaching some human dwelling. At length, the light again re-appeared; and in a few minutes our beasts' hoofs clattered over the stones which paved the large court belonging to a handsome château.

For several minutes I sought about for some of the usual means of making myself heard; but not finding any, I was fain to have recourse to those which nature had furnished me withal; and I shouted as loud as I could bellow. Such sounds soon brought out some lackeys, with a lantern; and, while one, judging my quality I suppose by the vehemence of my vociferation, sprang to hold my horse, I related my plight to another, and claimed shelter and hospitality for the night.

The man replied that he would inform his master; and, after dismounting, little Ball-o-fire and myself were shown into a large dining-room, hung with handsome tapestry, while a table laid with two covers, and a blazing fire of old beech, presented preparations for refreshment, and signs of comfort, which might have increased our reluctance to change our lodging for the night, had we been compelled to do so by the inhospitality of the lord of the dwelling.

The servant left us by the fire, while he proceeded to a door

on the other side of the hall, which being opened, he announced our arrival and condition to some one within; describing our situation with a general enumeration of all the miseries of wet, and dirt, and fatigue, and hunger. In truth, as the man proceeded, I could not help feeling that I must present a most wretched and vagabond appearance indeed, and doubted much whether the master of the mansion, if he came forth to examine us in person, would permit such an ill-looking scoundrel as the servant pictured me, to remain a minute longer than necessary in his house.

There was a cheerful blaze of light, however, issued forth through the open door from the inner chamber, which had something in it comfortably hospitable; and I soon had the satisfaction of finding that the good lackey's description of our state and appearance had not received the slightest attention; for some one within who had been speaking when he entered, went on all the while; and the cessation of the servant's voice allowed me to hear the harangue the other was addressing to some third person.

The words—"And truly, as I was saying, if there be any means of healing painful memories, you will find them in France, which is not only a garden of ever new delights, but is a garden which in itself contains a thousand fountains of consolation, of whose waters, with that exquisite liberality of feeling, for which, above all the nations upon earth, the French—What is it, François? Is the supper ready?"—these words at once convinced me that I should meet with an acquaintance in one of the guests, if not in the master of the dwelling.

The servant told his story again, but with somewhat less minuteness: and I heard an immediate bustle within. "A stranger!" cried the same voice. "Lost his way! drenched in the rain! Show him in. Bon Dieu! why did you not show him in? For the honour of France, which is, without any comparison, the most hospitable country in Europe, you should not have hesitated a moment on his admission. Show him in! show him in! Have something more added to the supper, and light a fire in the mirror chamber."

The servant now announced, that monsieur would be glad to see me, if I would walk forward into the cabinet beyond; and I accordingly presented myself in a moment to my worthy acquaintance, Monsieur de Vitray. He had prepared himself with somewhat of a theatrical attitude, to receive the belated traveller; and before he perceived who it was, he had taken two steps forward on the tip of his toe, and made two bows, the one distant and reserved, the other more familiar and courteous. But as I approached into the full light, and his memory came to

his aid, he skipped forward at once, took me in his arms, and embracing me with the most overpowering demonstrations of regard, welcomed me to his château with, I believe, unfeigned joy.

My eyes now fell upon the person with whom he had been conversing; and, while I replied to my friend's civility, I had a full view of his companion, who sat with his glance fixed upon the fire, taking very little notice of what was passing around him.

He was apparently a Benedictine monk; and had doubtless been in former years a very handsome man, though there was nothing peculiarly striking in his features. His cowl was thrown back, and the shaved head, with its ring of grizzled black hair that fringed the tonsure, gave a very peculiar character to his countenance, which seemed lengthened and attenuated, by the want of the garniture with which it is furnished by nature. His beard, on the contrary, had been suffered to grow very long; and though originally as black as ink, was now thickly mingled with white hairs. In complexion he was deadly pale, and would have looked almost like a statue, had not his heavy eyebrows overhung as bright and sparkling a pair of deep black eyes as ever flashed from a human countenance. He was evidently deep in thought when we came in, and remained without rising, with his glance fixed upon the fire, while his whole countenance assumed, from the very intensity of his gaze, a look of sternness and almost ferocity, which the features did not seem calculated to convey.

Monsieur de Vitray, after having in vain attempted to call the Benedictine's attention to an introduction he endeavoured to effect between us, urged my proceeding to the chamber he had ordered to be prepared, for the purpose of changing my dripping dress. This would not have been easily accomplished—as although I was plentifully supplied, as far as under garments went, I had not taken the pains to purchase myself a complete change of attire when I habited myself in mourning at Calais—but my worthy host accompanied me himself to my chamber, and insisted upon my putting on his black velvet morning gown, and thus descending to the supper table.

The monk had apparently exhausted the train of thought in which he had been engaged at our first entrance, for on our return to the small cabinet in which we left him, he rose, and soon joined our conversation as a man of talent and knowledge of the world. There was something of stern austerity, indeed, pervaded his manners; but withal, there mingled in the webs of all his ideas, a thread of deep feeling, which gave a splendid hue to the whole texture. The secret, I believe, of exciting

the sympathies of our fellow-creatures, and awaking an interest for ourselves in the bosoms of others, is that alone—to feel deeply ;—not as some men do, to let our minds dance like a light waterfly on the current of all events ; but to have hearts, which, like a fine instrument, give back full and distinct tones to all that touches them, whether the chords that are struck be gay or gloomy, be tuneful or discordant.

Notwithstanding the rigour and sternness of the Benedictine's demeanour, and what appeared to me a frivolous attention to minute forms—the crossing of his breast, the long and silent prayer, the plate of herbs and the cup of cold water—yet there was a power and an intensity in all his thoughts, that commanded attention and interest. There was a degree of fancifulness, too, in his conversation, notwithstanding its austere gravity, which gave it a singular and exciting character. Nothing was mentioned—not the most trifling circumstance, but had its peculiar associations in his mind ; and those often so remote, and at first sight so irrelevant, that the thoughts of his hearers were obliged to labour after, startled and yet not shocked, by the rapid progress of his.

I remember two or three instances, though, perhaps, not the most striking ones, which occurred in the course of our conversation during that evening. We spoke of the wind as it howled and whistled, and rushed past the old building, as if in anger at the massive walls which defied its power.

“In France,” said Monsieur de Vitray, “our glorious climate is so happily tempered to our benignant soil, that these gales, which happen only at the equinoxes, find our seed sown, and safely germed in the spring, and our fruits gathered, and corn granaried in the autumn. They then come to clear and purify the air for the rest of the year.”

“Hark how it howls !” said the monk, taking his own peculiar view as the clamorous raging of the importunate blast compelled attention to its angry murmurs. “Hark how it howls ! telling of shipwreck, and desolation, and death. Woe to the sea-tossed mariner ! Woe to the anxious and expectant wife, that, waiting the sailor's or the fisherman's return, hears the furious voice of the tempest, trumpeting his death, at the shaking door of her poor cabin ! Woe to the lordly merchant, whose wealth is on the main, and who hears in every gust the tidings of ruined speculations, and broken hopes, and bankruptcy, and shame ! Well has Satan been called the prince of the powers of the air ; and never do I hear the equinoctial blasts go howling and revelling through the pathless sky, without thinking it may be that the evil spirits that hover round mankind are then for a season unchained, to ride career-

ing over the earth, and in the agony of their joy, to work their will of mischief and dismay." We spoke of the rain; and I, foolishly enough, in mentioning all the annoyance it had occasioned me, loaded it with maledictions.

"Call it not accursed, my son," said the monk. "Oh no! remember that every drop that falls, bears into the bosom of the earth a quality of beautiful fertility. Remember that each glorious tree, and herb, and shrub, and flower, owes to those drops its life, its freshness, and its beauty. Remember that half the loveliness of the green world is all their gift; and that, without them, we should wander through a dull desert, as dusty as the grave. Take but a single drop of rain, cloistered in the green fold of a blade of grass, and pour upon it one ray of the morning sun—where will you get lapidary, with his utmost skill, to cut a diamond that shall shine like that? Oh no! blessed for ever be the beautiful drops of the sky, the refreshing soothers of the seared earth—the nourishers of the flowers—that calm race of beings, which are all loveliness and tranquillity, without passion, or pain, or desire, or disappointment—whose life is beauty, and whose breath is perfume."

I would have fain heard more; for to me there was a freshness in the character of the Benedictine, that was well worthy of more deep remark; but, unhappily, Monsieur de Vitray did not share the same feelings, and with the one eternal current of thought, which had so channelled his mind, that I defy the strength and perseverance of Hercules to have turned the stream, he once more bore away the conversation to France. The monk showed no signs of annoyance, whatever he felt; but rose and retired to his chamber, leaving me to an excellent bottle of Burgundy, a more substantial supper than he had made himself, and the eternal chiming in of Monsieur de Vitray's laud of France; which, with reverence be it spoken, was worse than a Greek chorus.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE room in which I was to pass the night was a large old-fashioned chamber, the tapestry on which represented the triumphant return of David, after his first achievement in the death of Goliath. The future king of Israel was represented as a fat, and empty-faced boy; who, dancing away with most obstreperous merriment, with one leg raised so high, that the knee almost kicked his chin; and the other, though less bent,

not a little contorted—dragging along with him a giant's head, as big as himself, sadly disfigured by a lurid spot in the middle of the forehead. After the little conqueror, came three pair of trumpeters, blowing their worsted cheeks till it seemed as if they would have burst the hangings; and then followed an immense train of armed men, on whose faces I bestowed near half an hour's examination. Through slits, made on purpose in the tapestry, projected on each side of the room a long bracket of iron gilt, which held forth a large mirror; and in the dim light, afforded by the candles with which the chamber was furnished, I saw in these looking-glasses, whichever way I moved, four indistinct figures moving about also, in various points of view. The sight annoyed me; and as, notwithstanding my day's fatigue, I did not feel inclined to sleep, I bade little Ball-o'-fire, who had been well taken care of by the servants, cast my cloak over one of the mirrors, and something else over another; and then go to bed and sleep, in a bed closet, that opened out of the antechamber.

The lackey, whose place it was to attend that apartment, had piled me up a sufficient number of logs of wood to have burned a hecatomb, had I desired it; and loading the fire with nearly half a beech-tree, I sat down in a large chair before it, and watched the flaming and hissing of the newly ignited wood, while my busy thoughts wandered far into futurity.

I thought of Emily Langleigh, and the joy she would feel at my return; and the delight of journeying with her to Paris. And then I contemplated obtaining from my brother the renunciation which alone was required to our union; and hope and imagination combined to picture many a bright scene of happiness to come. There were difficulties, I knew, but difficulties were made to be conquered; and in revolving all that might occur, and laying out many a fanciful means of encountering fancied inconveniences, I passed nearly an hour in that sort of dreamy pensiveness, which can hardly be called thought, it is so broken and unconnected. Gradually, as I went on, the ideas became more and more indistinct; I felt a heavy weight above my eyes; and, in short, I fell asleep. My thoughts, however, were not totally overpowered by the dull god, though they suffered a strange metamorphosis under his influence.

I seemed to be walking with my beloved Emily on the banks of the Rance, and talking with her on all that was happy. I could hear the tones of her sweet thrilling voice, and see the sparkling of her bright pure eyes, as if it were all reality. It seemed as if my mind was an actor, playing our two characters alternately, for in my dream, it was strange how completely she spoke as Emily Langleigh, and how completely I answered as

Harry Masterton ; but soon the vision became more confused : the looking-glasses were remembered ; and whatever way we turned, there were four figures to be seen at an equal distance from us, imitating all our actions. Then came King David and his trumpeters ; and, suddenly, he cast down the head of Goliath, between Emily and myself. Without thinking, I gave it a tremendous kick, when suddenly the enormous head of the giant began rolling with fearful rapidity. The trumpeters and the armed crowd that followed, divided into two distinct bands. One gave the head a kick, and another a kick ; and as complete a game of football commenced as ever was played on a village-green upon May-day. At length, as it flew between the two parties, with increasing speed, and I could hear the iron with which the players appeared to be covered, rattling in the scuffle, one ill-visaged fellow, with a black beard and a very tapestry sort of face, gave it a kick which sent it over towards Emily and myself. The bloody head, still retaining, notwithstanding all the blows it had received, exactly the same appearance it had in the hangings, was just about to fall upon Emily's bosom, when suddenly interposing, I received the blow upon my shoulder, with such force that I started up awake, and turned towards the side where the game had been going on. It was towards one of the mirrors that I found myself looking, when my apprehension was fully returned, and I at once saw that my cloak had fallen off it, and might have occasioned some noise ; but at the same time I perceived the reflection of another figure standing by me on the other side. Turning sharply round, I beheld the Benedictine monk, and found that his laying his hand suddenly upon my arm, had probably caused the sensation of something striking me.

"Thy dreams are troubled, my son," he said, when he saw that I was fully awake. "Thy limbs but now were moved ; and thy lips opening, as if the struggles of thy soul shook thy whole frame, though every fibre was chained in the heavy bonds of sleep. It must have been an evil dream."

"Far more absurd than fearful, good father," I replied. "But may I ask what it is gives me the pleasure of your company at this hour of night ?"

"You do not remember me, then ?" he said ; "but how should you ? It is not natural you should—and 'tis better as it is. Would I could as readily forget myself. But who is that ?" he demanded, turning towards the door, on which his glance immediately directed my eyes. The figure of my little page gliding in, awakened by the voice of a stranger, was that which had called the monk's attention ; and bidding the boy return to his bed, and close the door, I remarked to the good

father, that it was wonderful he had not wakened him as he passed through the antechamber.

"I entered by the other door behind the tapestry," he replied. "But to speak of why I came, which imports more than the manner—tell me (for you too are changed since last I beheld you), tell me, are you not Henry, the second son of the Lord Masterton?"

I replied that I was; and at the same time I let my eye fix upon the face of the monk, of which I had certainly some, though a very vague, recollection. But although I suffered memory to glide over the chain of events gone by, down to my very infancy, I could find no link with which my remembrance of the Benedictine connected itself. I first thought it was one person, and then another, of the few who had frequented Masterton House during my youth; but it was evident that a great change must have taken place in his countenance since I had seen him. I endeavoured then to fix the period within which he must have beheld me, by calculating how far back my appearance resembled that which I at present bore, to such an extent, as to enable an ordinary degree of acuteness to retrace, in the young man, the features of the lad or the boy; and I determined, in my own mind, that more than six years could not have elapsed—though the shaving off my beard and mustachoes, which I have mentioned doing at Calais, had given me back my more youthful look, and made me much more like what I was some two or three years before, than I had lately appeared.

While such considerations were passing in my mind with the rapid and lightning-like progress of thought, the monk had remained silent for a moment also, gazing at the embers of the fire, and apparently contemplating the past likewise. He raised his eyes, however, a moment after, demanding—

"And where is your father, young gentleman, that I meet you here, travelling almost alone, in a strange country, and in a guise certainly not exactly suited to your rank?"

"My father," I replied, "is no more; but, excuse me if I remind you, good father, that you are asking questions somewhat freely of one who has but a night's acquaintance with you, as far as he knows, and that, too, in times when every man has much that he may be willing to keep to himself, till he knows the right of any one who interrogates him."

The monk's brow darkened for a moment, but it cleared again, and he replied—

"You are right, young gentleman—you are right: I have no title to ask you any questions, but that acknowledged by common courtesy—and yet you will perhaps indulge me somewhat

farther than common courtesy commands, when you know that I feel a deep and personal interest in many of your transactions. There is much that I wish to know; and yet, as I have concealments myself, I feel that I am questioning without any right, even such as willingness to reciprocate confidence can give. Tell me, then, will you satisfy me? Will you grant me the explanations which I came here to seek?"

"In the scenes through which I have lately passed," I replied, "I have learned more caution—suspicion call it, if you will, good father, than ever I thought to acquire; and I must hear the nature of the information you require, before I promise to give it."

"Well, well," said the monk, "I think I can so frame my questions, that you may find it not difficult to answer them. Let me see,"—and he paused for a moment, while I fancied I could see him draw, as it were, a veil of art over his mind, which seemed to dim and obscure every expression of feeling in his countenance. Whether it was a sort of habitual and prejudiced suspicion of the Roman clergy, or not, I do not know, which produced that impression on my mind. Certain it is, however, that with no rational cause for such an estimation of any class of my fellow-men—without personal experience, (for I had never met with twenty papists in my life,) and merely from the vague connexion of historical facts with very doubtful anecdotes, I was accustomed to look upon the Roman-catholic priesthood as the most artful and cunning body of men that ever this world in which we live had produced. Thus I fancied I saw all the strong feelings and mighty passions, of which that monk's heart seemed the receptacle, disappearing from his countenance, as he judged it necessary to dissimulate—like the phantoms from some of those magic mirrors which we read of in old tales, and which showed for a moment a moving and animated scene, that faded gradually away into misty and uncertain shadows. "I would not hurt your feelings," he continued; "but pray, if the matter be not too painful, tell me how your father died? When last I heard of him, he was in high health, and his old age itself promised to be green."

"It did so," I answered; but it was not the failing of his corporeal frame by either age or sickness, which caused his death. He fell by a chance shot in an affray which took place between a body of the Parliamentary troops sent down to Masterton House, and a party of cavaliers assembled to witness my brother's wedding."

"Then your brother is married!" the monk exclaimed, seizing my hand, and fixing on me a glance full of eagerness. "Then the Lady Emily Langleigh is his wife!"

"Not so," I answered, though unable to conceive in the least how my brother's marriage could so much affect my present companion. "Not so: he is still unmarried. The ceremony was broken off by the arrival of the Parliamentary soldiers, commanded by an officer of the name of Dixon."

"Fury!" exclaimed the Benedictine, starting from his seat, and stamping his foot on the ground with all the wild intemperance of actual insanity—"fury, fury!"—And he took two or three strides up and down the chamber, with his eyes glaring, and his teeth clenched, as if unable by the strongest effort to master the passion with which he struggled. At length he paused, and coming near me, he added, while he wiped the drops from his brow—"Your father promised solemnly that he should wed her: why did he not force on the marriage? How came he to die with his promise unfulfilled?"

"Calm yourself, my good father," I said, astonished at the dreadful agitation which I beheld, and which, in the range of calculation, I had not the slightest means of accounting for:—"Calm yourself, and you will see that your question savours a little of an agitated mind."

"Savours of madness, sir!" he exclaimed. "Answer my question: but no—I will be calm. Why did not your father, after your return to Devonshire, hasten your brother's marriage with the Lady Emily? Was there any reason?"

"He did hasten it, sir," I answered, as much as I suppose he thought decent and proper. "I have already told you the ceremony was interrupted in the midst, by the arrival of the troops who arrested my brother."

"Then he stood with her at the altar?" demanded the monk: "he was about to unite his fate with hers—but was it willingly, sir? Did he act by no compulsion? Did he go to the altar with his heart hers?"

"I cannot answer your question," I was replying, when he went on himself with increasing vehemence—"Or was he part in his own arrest? Walter Dixon?—yet how could that be? Yes, yes, I see it all: it was a scheme—a base scheme. Villains!" and he shook his clenched hand in the air, as if he menaced some one the object of his thoughts. Then again, casting himself on a seat, he paused, meditating for several minutes—rose again—paced the room, but with a different aspect; and, as he returned to where I sat, said, in a low and mournful voice—"I have abjured the world—cast from me such thoughts—endeavoured to forget—and yet I must, I must be satisfied. You have seen me much agitated, Captain Masterton," he proceeded, "but you have kindly borne with my weakness, and satisfied my curiosity in some points. When I can

make up my mind to give you my confidence, which some day I will do—for I feel sure that our commune will not, cannot end here—you will see that I have not been agitated without cause. In the meantime, can you tell me where your brother is?"

"I do not precisely know," I replied; "I have returned but now from seeking him in London, whither he had been carried after his arrest; but I find that he has made his escape from imprisonment, and has quitted the country; but I know not whither he went."

"Did he quit the country alone?" demanded the monk, earnestly. "Did he quit the country alone?"

"I cannot say," I answered, not thinking myself justified, circumstanced as I was, to hint either my suspicion that Frank had betaken himself to Paris, or my conviction that he had a companion in his flight.

"You cannot say! I believe you are deceiving me," replied the Benedictine, "and I could ask you such questions, young man, that the answers would burn upon your cheeks, if you refused them utterance with your lips. But I will not."

"I think I should know how to treat any man who dared to ask me such questions," I replied; "I am happy, therefore, sir, that you think fit to abstain."

"Nay, nay, young gentleman," said the other, in a calmer tone; "I have spoke this night more angrily than I ought—God forgive me!—more angrily, more sinfully, than my calling or my faith should have permitted. I have no right—I know I have no right; and yet let me ask one question more. Know ye where Walter Dixon may be found? for to him, all villain as he is, must I apply for farther tidings."

In regard to Walter Dixon, no such scruples affected me, as had prevented me from being more explicit in regard to my brother; and I replied at once, not perceiving the conclusion at which he would arrive, that he was probably in Paris; as thither he had purposed to direct his steps, when I had passed the Channel in the same boat with him from England.

"In Paris!" said the monk. "In Paris! it is strange! Then probably your brother is there too, for he will not lose sight of him easily. But tell me: have I been deceived? or is it true, that when you marched with a regiment raised by yourselves, from Devonshire to Kent, at Amesbury you were met by Walter Dixon, who conducted you to a village called Penford-bourne, and there left you? and was it not he that advised your stay, till you heard farther from your party?"

To find in a stranger, such a minute knowledge of what had passed on our march, it may be easily supposed astonished me

not a little. I replied, however, that his statement was correct; and he proceeded,—

“Did he not, after counselling your halt there, furnish you with—But, no, no, no!” he added, with a quivering lip and an agitated voice—“No, no! I can ask no farther, in the tone that now becomes me;” and he again paced the room with quick and irregular steps muttering to himself: “I had hoped that this had all passed by; but the fit comes upon me again. Yet I will be calm.”

After a few minutes, spent in an evident struggle to tranquillize feelings that had mastered judgment and even habitual control, the Benedictine resumed his seat, and inquired in a more easy tone, whither I now proposed to turn my steps?

“I am now,” I replied, willing to see whether he would open himself more in regard to my dear Emily, in whom he seemed to take so deep and strange an interest; and fearless of betraying her into any danger, when I was near to protect her—“I am now about to rejoin the Lady Emily Langleigh, and her cousin Lady Margaret, who wait my return in Brittany; but our after movements must be determined by circumstances.

“Then the Lady Emily,” he demanded, “is really in Brittany, as we heard?”

“She is so!” I replied. “Yet I cannot conceive who could have given you the information; for I should imagine her situation and name were of too little interest in this part of the world, to be the subject of even occasional gossip.”

“It matters not how the tidings spread,” he answered. “Suffice it that they are true; and right happy am I to hear them confirmed by your lips. Nevertheless, as you seem in some sort her guardian for the time, till your brother can be found, have a care of her in France. It is a light and idle country, in some things, where men think that the vain folly, which they emptily fancy to be love, is a homage which every woman expects at their hands, and you must guard her for your brother.”

“There might be matter of serious offence in that speech,” I replied, avoiding the subject, “were it repeated in the ears of good Monsieur de Vitray.”

“Not so,” replied the monk; “we have been acquainted with each other from youth; and he knows that I am not one to flatter even his weakness. He is an excellent man; but in the brain of every human being there is one tender point—touch which, and he is insane. Happy the man whose madness falls upon some prejudice common to a number of his fellow-creatures. Monsieur de Vitray is a living caricature of the whole French

nation, who have undoubtedly many excellent qualities peculiarly their own, and have amongst them a full and fair proportion of those admirable beings of all classes, who, in heart or in talent, in wit or in understanding, rise above the general level of humanity. They have, however, their share of foibles, too; and amongst those foibles, that which in Monsieur de Vitray has deviated into madness, is not the least. But, still as every nation must have its weakness, I do not know that, if the choice were left to ourselves, we could fix upon one that would do less evil, and more good, than national vanity."

"I do not, then, speak with a Frenchman," I replied; "and, indeed, from all that has passed this night, I cannot but conclude that in you, I see a countryman of my own."

"A monk has no country," he answered, with a melancholy smile. "When we abjure all worldly things, we abjure that, amongst the rest; but yet the relaxation of our rigorous rules extends to that too; and as I, who ought to walk on foot, and never quit my convent or its garden but on some religious or charitable purpose, now keep an ambling mule to travel through the country, I believe there will be no great sin in owning, that I am by birth an Englishman, though the greater part of my life I have passed in France or Italy."

I was glad to find the conversation now turned to more general subjects; on which the monk spoke with calmness, and wherein I could bear a part with freedom; but he did not indulge in it long; and rising almost immediately, he excused himself for having intruded into my chamber, and broken in upon my hours of repose. "You may see," he added, "that I had deep and painful motives for infringing common rules. However, something tells me that we shall yet see much more of each other. I think you will soon find it necessary, or convenient, to bend your steps towards Paris. I go there also; and if, at the Benedictine house in the quartier St. Jacques, you will ask for Dom André, you will find one who will rejoice to see you. Good night! and pleasanter dreams than that which I interrupted."

Thus saying, he left me, and retired by a door behind the tapestry, which led out, like the one through the antechamber, to the principal corridor of the château.

He left me—notwithstanding all that had passed, or rather in consequence of all that had passed—both pleased and interested. I had seen deep feelings struggling in the bosom of a human creature, and gaining even the temporary mastery of a fine and high-toned mind: but I had seen them nobly combated and finally subdued. I had now beheld him calm, and I had beheld him agitated; but in every state there was a flashing forth

of a bright and commanding spirit, whose powers were rather restrained than exerted. In his demeanour there was much dignity, with perhaps a touch of pride; but the whole was softened and harmonized by the expression of sorrows and anxieties, common to the lowliest of intelligent beings, and by pleasures and enjoyments, derived from the simplest and purest objects in the world around us.

I felt that he was a man who might exercise a great, perhaps a dangerous command over my mind; and I saw that with strong passions—passions which had in them a touch of almost frenzied energy, there was a power of concealing, if not of governing them, which, though only exerted for a moment, was evidently the offspring of ancient habits. Who was he? was the question naturally before me; but the more I revolved it in my mind, the farther I seemed from its solution. From his anxiety for Emily, I almost believed him a relation; and yet I had never heard of any others that she had still living but the Lady Margaret. That excellent woman and her husband stood during his life in the same relationship to Emily and to each other; but Sir Thomas Langleigh had been long dead. I next strove to confirm the supposition of the monk's connexion with her by blood, by recalling his features and hers, and seeking for a resemblance. There was none on earth to be found, and wearied and at fault, I cast off my clothes, and laid myself down to rest.

CHAPTER XXV.

I ROSE early in the morning, with the intention of proceeding as speedily as possible. The storm of the preceding evening had passed away, the wind had fallen, the rain had ceased; and the sun was looking out brightly over a world glistening with the drops of the past night. To my imagination, as I had ridden along the dark and weary road which had led me thither, the château of good Monsieur de Vitray had appeared seated in the midst of gloomy wilds, and black and sombre forests; and I could scarcely believe my eyes when I found it surrounded by a rich and smiling country, covered with fields already bearing promise of the next year's harvest, and young plantations of beautiful wood, glowing with all the bright varieties of autumn.

I found the worthy proprietor, robed in a flowered silk dressing-gown (for I had appropriated his velvet one), and busily engaged in the cultivation of his garden, which boasted, even at

that season, in its various trim and regular parterres, a great number of beautiful flowers.

"My dear young gentleman," he cried, after the first salutation of the morning was over, "I was just now examining these flowers, after last night's tempest; and really, every time I come into my garden, my wonder, my admiration, and my thankfulness are excited towards God, for his infinite goodness to this my native country. Gracious Heaven! should we not have had full reason to be contented, if when the Creator destined France to be the garden of fine wits and noble hearts—the flower-bed of generous spirits and scientific minds—if he had even denied to our soil and climate, what he bestowed upon our understanding, and had left us in a poor and arid country, with only half the natural productions that he gave to other lands? but now, now, my young friend, what ought to be our gratitude, when, not only as a race of men we produce those who far excel all the heroes and demigods of antiquity in courage and warlike skill—who render the names of Pyrrhus, and Hannibal, Scipio, Cæsar, Camillus, and Cocles forgotten; and those also who might well dare the forum of the academic grove to bring forward aught comparable in eloquence or philosophy—what ought to be our gratitude to Heaven, I say, when not only our country produces such a race as this, but when it is gifted with a soil and a climate that excel those of any other land?"

There are some speeches to which it is very difficult to reply, and those of good Monsieur de Vitray were generally of that class. Happily, however, he required very little answer; and quite satisfied with his own reasonings upon the subject, he did not desire to hear those of any one else. The gaping admiration of two gardeners who followed him, nevertheless seemed to afford him both pleasure and encouragement; for I remarked, that though his speech was addressed to me, he so contrived to turn himself, that not a word of it was lost by those on whom he doubtless believed it would have more instructive effect. Happily, a little cough that he had caught gave occasional intervals; and after he had gone on some way farther than I have thought necessary to record, and had told me that he was busily writing a book to be called "*Les Délices de la France*,"* I obtained an opportunity, thanks to a fit of coughing, to tell him of my intention of proceeding immediately.

He would not hear, however, of my going before breakfast; and in turning back to the house, we were met by the Bene-

* A copy of this book, which is now very scarce, is in possession of the transcriber of these pages, for the gift of which he begs to return his thanks to the donor.

dictine, who saluted me with kindness and courtesy, but took no notice of our interview during the night. He was grave and thoughtful, but his appearance exhibited no traces of the agitation which he had displayed; and as I looked back to what had passed at our last meeting, I could hardly believe it to be aught but a dream.

After breakfast, when I rose to take my departure, Monsieur de Vitray declared he would accompany me a few leagues on the way; and the Benedictine also ordered his mule to be brought, with the purpose of joining our party. It was a spirited animal, and nearly as beautiful and swift as a horse; and I could not but remark, that the monk rode with much more of a military than an ecclesiastical air. Our conversation was of indifferent subjects, as far as Monsieur de Vitray would suffer them to be so; but I thought I perceived, that when the lead was in the Benedictine's hands, if I may so express myself, he endeavoured as much as was in his power to gather more information on the subject of his former inquiries, without, however, appearing to do so.

Of course Monsieur de Vitray kept his ground; but the monk often contrived to turn the topic started by his friend in another direction, and skilfully brought it round to the matters which occupied his own mind.

"Egypt, Greece, and Italy, my young friend," said Monsieur de Vitray, with an air of kind instruction, "each pretended in turn to be the mother of the Sciences and the dwelling-place of the Muses; but you may still easily see, that none of these climates was destined to be ultimately the abode of the arts, for each lost them in turn; and gradually they fixed their abode in France, which now, when Helicon and Parnassus are forgotten, shows herself clearly the school of sciences, the mountain of the muses, and the asylum of the arts."

"All this," said the Benedictine, "I should scarcely suppose our young friend had yet had time to examine. Pray how long is it since you first arrived in France?"

"Not quite a month," I replied, "and a part of that time I have spent in again returning to England, so that very little of my time has been given to observation of the country in which I now am."

Monsieur de Vitray was about to join in; but the Benedictine stopped him by a question which excited all his attention. "Though you have been such a short time in France," he said, "pray inform us which of the two countries you as yet like best?"

The question was difficult to answer with *bienséance*; but the monk almost instantly relieved me, by adding—"Yet first tell

us what part of England, as far as you have seen, you prefer, in order that we may judge of your taste."

He spoke with a smile, as if amused at parrying Monsieur de Vitray's harangues; and I replied—"I have been so little out of Devonshire, that I can hardly judge of the rest of England any more than I can judge of France; yet from all that I have seen, I should say that I prefer my native county."

"Association—all association, my dear sir," replied the monk. "That is your place of memories, Devonshire; there, for you, are stored up all the sweet recollections of youth; and, depend upon it, wherever you go—whether your life be a dream of fortunate enjoyment, like that of some men who have their good things here—or whether your journey through existence be laid amidst a long desert of disappointments and regrets, like mine—to that place shall turn your eyes with a lingering love, that nothing can remove; if your path be amongst bright things, you shall still think of that land, as the sweetest spot in Tempe; and if you find the world a wilderness, there the oasis of your imagination shall be laid."

"Nevertheless," said Monsieur de Vitray, "any one who uses his reason must find such a combination of charms and perfections—such an accumulation of beauties and excellences—so much to admire, and so much to love in France, that he cannot but allow, that though there may be many spots that are extremely beautiful—though there are many that are extremely delightful, the palm must be given to France."

"But this young gentleman has not yet had an opportunity of judging all its qualities," replied the monk; "and indeed, I will not have you, my son, forestall the enjoyment of discovering them for himself, especially as he will most likely proceed to Paris, where, as you acknowledge yourself, the cream—the excellence of all the enjoyments, even of France, is to be found. I think you propose going thither?" he added, as a question to me.

"Such, indeed, is my intention," I replied. "But so many things may occur to alter that determination, that I dare scarcely count upon it myself with any feeling of certainty."

"I shall count upon it, however," replied the monk; "for I shall hope to have the pleasure of meeting you in that city, my son. Will you not promise me a visit at my cell? In good sooth, some society, different from the dull routine of monastic life, is necessary to relieve the literary labours of us poor Benedictines."

I willingly promised to visit the monk, if I ever proceeded as far as Paris; and indeed he had contrived to interest me so highly, to ally himself to so many of my thoughts and feelings,

in the short time we had been acquainted, that the prospect of seeing him again, was like the taking up of some book of great power, where at every page we expect to find something new, and striking, and relative to ourselves as human beings.

I believe, too, that to create great interest in the bosom of any of our fellow-creatures, it is necessary strongly to excite the imagination; it little matters by what means. This, the Benedictine had done in regard to myself, more than any man I had ever met. The knowledge he had of myself and my family, the deep and extraordinary feelings by which he seemed affected towards us, and my utter ignorance of him and all his affairs, stimulated me to know more; and at once excited and baffled my curiosity. At the same time his strong and original mind—the powerful and uncontrollable working of his heart, and the cares and sorrows to which he occasionally alluded, with the strong traces that every moment appeared of fine and noble sentiments, engaged my better feelings in his behalf, and gave me an inclination to love as well as to admire him.

He reined in his mule as he spoke the last words I have mentioned; and after receiving my promise to visit him in Paris, he prayed for every happiness on my way; and giving me his benediction, left me to pursue my path with Monsieur de Vitray, who proposed to accompany me another league.

When the monk was gone, I endeavoured to gain some information concerning him from my companion; but whether intentionally, or merely in the common course of his mental dreams, I do not know, Monsieur de Vitray sheltered himself from all questions under the glories of France. He did speak for a moment, it is true, upon the subject of his friend; but he darted off again almost immediately. He had known great sorrows, he said; and had sought relief from painful reflection in devoting himself to religion. He had first become a member of the society of Jesus; but finding that the more worldly avocations which the regulations of the Jesuits not only permitted but required, necessarily involved him in transactions and scenes which recalled all that was painful in the world he sought to quit, he had embraced the rule of St. Benedict, in its mildest form, and had already, in the seclusion of the cloister and the pursuit of literary acquirement, gained far more tranquillity than he had known for several years before. “Nevertheless,” continued Monsieur de Vitray, “as you see, all the seductive charms which adorn the land he has chosen for his place of residence induce him to quit from time to time the shadow of his monastery, the superior of which is a kind and liberal man, and does all that he consistently can, to render devotion sweet. Dom André, indeed, does not acknowledge that

the beauty that he sees round him, and the excellence that is exposed to his eye in every direction, are the sole motives that lead him forth again into the world. He says that it is a wandering disposition—a mind shaken and injured by the sorrows he has encountered. Nay more, he sometimes sportively denies to France all the merit which she possesses; but he does it but to oppose me, for a moment; for can there be on earth a man so utterly blind, as not to perceive that France is the paradise of earthly delights—the theatre of honour and glory—the school of arts and sciences—the land of men of genius and learning—the native place of abundance and beauty—and the temple of fame and immortality?”

I could certainly have furnished him with an instance of a man so blind; but I refrained from opposing a doctrine, in which good Monsieur de Vitray was so bigoted a devotee; and he remained irrecoverably plunged in France, till we reached the point where he was to leave me. There we parted, with many thanks on my side for his hospitality and kindness; and on his, many expressions of affection and regard. He made his horse caracol and curvette in the true style of the manège, as he took leave; and I, with a beast whose graces were all untaught, if he had any, pursued my way towards Dinan.

I had now, had I desired it, a subject of contemplation, with regard to the monk, wherewith to diversify the somewhat engrossing thoughts of my approaching meeting with Emily. I required no other ideas, however, than those, and indeed the Benedictine would speedily have been forgotten, had there not been a continual link of connexion between all that had passed in our private conversation, and the image of the dear girl towards whom I was so eagerly bending my steps. His inquiries had related to her—in her marriage with my brother he had taken evidently a deep and extraordinary interest—and my imagination conjured up a thousand vague and unreal ways of accounting for that interest, and those inquiries, none of which proved true eventually, though some of them, and those the very wildest, came in a degree near truth.

I rejected them all, however, one by one; and I looked forward with no small eagerness to the explanation which I doubted not Emily herself could give me. I knew of no relation she had in France, it was true. I had never heard of any such person as the Benedictine; but then I remembered how little I had heard of Lady Margaret, before I had seen her, though I had found since, that she had kept up a constant correspondence with my father, on the subject of our dear Emily, and a broken one with Emily herself. The same might have happened in another instance—I might even have seen the Benedictine in for-

mer days ; and certainly his face haunted my memory, as some indistinct countenance that we see in a dream, the likeness of some one we know well, and yet not precisely the same. Emily, however, I doubted not, could and would explain all ; and onward I hastened, as fast as I could go, towards the place of her dwelling.

I must now speak of my constant companion, little Ball-o'-fire, who had ridden on beside me with more than his usual taciturnity. Fancying that the boy was what is commonly called sulky, on account of the sharp manner I had sent him back to his bed on the preceding night, while the Benedictine was speaking with me, I tried in the first instance to win him by gentleness from his silent mood ; but, finding that he still answered in monosyllables, I took upon me to lecture him for his supposed moodiness.

"It is not that—it is not that," replied the page ; "but the man puzzles me, and I do not love to be puzzled."

"What man ?" I demanded. "Of whom are you speaking ?"

"The man with the shaved head and the long black gown," he answered. "I have seen him before somewhere, as sure as I live ; and I never yet saw the face that I could not remember, till I saw his. I should like to see him with a Geneva skull-cap. He is mighty like some Presbyterian chaplain. Is he an Englishman ?"

I answered in the affirmative ; and asked the boy if he could not by any collateral circumstance call to mind where he had seen him.

"Then you do not know who he is either ?" rejoined the lad, sharply. "If he be an Englishman, why did he never speak English ? He wanted to conceal himself ; but if I had been in the house another day, I would have found him out."

"But how ?" I demanded ; "have you any clue ? Do you suspect any one ?"

"No !" replied the boy. "No ; I do not exactly suspect. But did you never, when you wanted to remember some place, or some thing, or some object—did you never find the name floating about in some dark corner of your brain, and to be dragged to light by no means, though you knew it as well as that which your godfathers insist on your carrying to your grave, whether you will or not ? When you have sat over a bowl of well-spiced mum, did you never see a bit of cinnamon floating upon the top, and try to skim it off with the ladle, while every time you thought you had it sure, it whirled away to another part of the dish, and left you with but a ladleful of liquid ? Well, so does the memory of that man's face serve me, when I want to catch it firmly. There it is before me, swimming about upon

the past as clear as the sun, till I strive to get hold of it, and see what it is exactly, but then it whirls away, and leaves me as wise as I was before."

I had seldom, if ever, heard my little companion spend so many words on any subject; and as he showed an evident inclination afterwards to meditate over the matter of his doubts in silence, I could not do less than humour his disposition so far as letting him hold his peace. Thus we proceeded without farther communication during the greater part of the day; and towards eight o'clock at night, reached the foot of the high hill on which Dinan stands. It being my intention to take up my abode for the time in the higher part of the town, I directed my horse's steps up the steep road that winds along under the walls; and, although the gates were shut, by using the infallible means which opens all doors, I procured admittance, and proceeded to the chief inn of the place.

As it was somewhat beyond convent hours, and I had no wish to scandalize the good abbess, or rather, I believe, prioress of the convent, where Emily boarded, I was fain to remain at the auberge all night; and some of the sweetest, yet most sleepless hours, that I can remember, did I pass. My journey was over; I was again near the being whom I loved more than anything else on earth—the dangers were gone—the difficulties overcome; and hope and joy were all that was before me. Imagination did her fairy work most splendidly, as in the calm, silent hours of the night I lay and fancied all the delight of the morrow's meeting. I imagined every look—I called up every feature—I saw the bright light shining from those beautiful eyes, that always seemed to me to overflow with soul. I heard the magic words of welcome spoken in the thrilling tones of joy; and sleep—dull, heavy, death-like sleep, could have nothing to do with such living hopes as these.

It was in vain I tried to close my eyes; and yet, after having given two or three hours to such blessed meditations, I tried hard to banish thought, even though it should be replete with the anticipation of pleasure, and to give myself up to slumber.

In the midst I caught the sound of a deep heavy bell swinging slowly through the silent air; and distant noises convinced me that something unusual was taking place in the town. In a moment afterwards, I heard a number of quick steps running under my windows, and the cry, "*Au feu! au feu!*" instantly showed me that some accidental fire was the occasion of the alarm. Hurrying on my clothes, I ran to the street with that curious sort of presentiment of evil which often breaks in upon our happiest dreams. The moment I reached the open air, the glare of the flames rising from the lower town showed me the

direction of the burning buildings, and following a multitude of persons, who were hastening to render assistance, I ran on, every step bringing me nearer and nearer the convent, in which I had left Lady Margaret and Emily. Oh, how my heart beat, and my speed increased, as I came within a few streets of the fire, and saw that it was evidently in the immediate vicinity, if not in the very dwelling of her I loved. At length I heard one of those who were running like myself ask a man who was standing coolly at the corner of the street where the fire was.

"C'est chez les Dames Ursulines," replied the man, without moving; but the name of the very convent made me bound forward like lightning; and in a moment after I was before the mass of tottering walls and blazing rafters, which had lately surrounded my Emily. There was an immense crowd on every side, standing at a most respectful distance, as usual on such occasions, and doing little or no service; while two or three, more vain or more courageous, were approaching nearer, commanding and exhorting the others, with all the insolence of hurry and bustle, and doing more harm than good.

I, however, had but one object—I had but one thought; and without staying to inquire what had become of the inmates of the convent, I burst through the crowd, tumbled over a man who would fain have directed me what to do, and rushed into the midst of the building, by the door that led to the parlour. There was nothing around me but falling beams, and smoking ruins, and a stifling atmosphere of heat and smoke. My breath was nearly stopped—my hands and face seemed scorched; and as I went reeling and tottering over the piles of burning wood, and slates, and plaster, that blocked up the path, fresh gusts of smoke almost deprived me of my sight also. I made my way on, notwithstanding, through the passages which, arched with stone in most places, had suffered less from the fire than the rest of the building; but when I issued out into the main body of the convent, and looked up, I saw that the roof had fallen in, and that farther search was vain.

Like one mad, I believe, in appearance, and certainly like one mad as far as sensation went, I issued forth from the burning ruins; and as the crowd made way for me to pass, I asked in a few hurried words what had become of the nuns: "They are all safe! they are all safe!" cried two or three voices, with the gladdest sounds that ever reached my ear. "They are all safe, and at the house of the ladies of St. Benedict, farther down the street."

There might still be a doubt, however, and making my way to the convent of the Benedictines, I knocked loudly at the door. The old porteress, who answered my summons, seemed

little disposed to give me any further information than that all the ladies of the other convent were safe, and taking some repose after their alarm.

"Was she sure?" I asked; "quite sure?"

"Yes, yes!" she answered, "as sure as that St. Benedict is a saint in heaven!"

"And the lady boarders?" I demanded; "are you sure that they also are all safe—none hurt—none missing?"

"Answer him! answer him, sister Martha!" said a friar, who had come up behind me, and saw the crabbed reluctance of the old dame to be troubled farther with my questions. "Answer him. He has some relation amongst them. I saw him go through the fire just now, as if he were mad, looking to see if any had been left."

"Well, well," she said; "I have no objection to tell him if he would take an answer. They are all safe; I heard the lady prioress go over all their names, professed sisters and novices, and lay sisters and boarders, and there was not one missing or hurt. And now, young man, go home and sleep. That is the best thing you can do."

So saying, she shut the door; and, as far satisfied as I could be, I thanked the friar for his interference, and turned towards my inn, but certainly not to sleep.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NOTHING but the actual sight of Emily Langleigh would have fully convinced me of her safety; and imagination, as if to compensate all the pleasant dreams which she had provided for me during the earlier part of the night, proved herself the most ingenious of tormentors, from the time I returned to the auberge till the dawning of the next morning. Even then I felt that some time must still pass before I could with propriety present myself at the convent: and suspense might have endured for an hour longer, had it not been at once changed to more painful apprehensions, by my little follower, who crept into my chamber almost as soon as it was light. I had, in truth, quite forgot the boy, in the hurry and agitation of the moment; but he now returned quite out of breath, and alarmed me by the very haste which sparkled in his eyes.

"She is not there!" he said, as he entered. "The Lady Emily is not at the convent."

"Are you sure, boy?" I demanded, almost wild with apprehension. "How do you know?"

"Because I have been there but now," he replied, "and have seen all the nuns and every one else go to matins in the chapel, and she was not amongst them."

I flew, rather than ran, to the convent of the Benedictine nuns; and hastening in, as I knew that the portress was most likely unacquainted with the names of the new guests in their convent, I asked to speak with the prioress of the Ursulines.

After detaining me for nearly half an hour, in a state of suspense and anxiety beyond description, the old lady appeared at the grate; and asked what I wished with her. She evidently did not remember me in my changed garb; but a few words only were requisite to explain to her my business and my anxieties; and replying simply, "No, no, they are quite safe," she told me, that if I would go round, she would order me to be admitted to the parlour.

To the parlour I then went, with a load taken off my heart; but to my surprise, I found the superior of the Ursulines, with the chief of the Benedictines alone. I seated myself in some surprise, though I evidently saw from the smiling countenance of both the ladies that they could have no very serious calamity to announce. In the first instance, as a matter of course, the prioress gave a few words to their blessed deliverance of the former night, and then went on to tell me, that long before that, the ladies I sought were gone.

"Gone!" I exclaimed, almost starting from my seat. "Gone! and pray, lady, can you inform me where they are gone to?"

"I know no more than yourself, my son," replied the old lady; "but has not sister Bridget, the portress, given you the letter they left for you? Nay, but I forgot that she is not portress here, and therefore you have not seen her. Well, she shall be called."

Sister Bridget was accordingly summoned; and entered with many a lowly reverence to her superiors; but the moment she set eyes upon me, she exclaimed; "Bon St. François! It is the English gentleman; and he will be wanting the letter, and my coffre was burned last night in the fire."

"And the letter was in it?" I asked, "and is burned also? Is it so?"

"Nay, do not look so fierce, monsieur," replied the old woman. "I could not help it. It was no fault of mine. I did not set the place on fire on purpose to burn your letter; not I."

I assured her that I was not fierce, as she called it, though

vexed and embarrassed; but she had got the advantage of having something to complain of, and she kept it, going on—"You need not frown at me, indeed; I would not have had my own things burned, if I could have helped it: there was the silver cross, which had been blessed by our holy father the pope; and the tooth of St. Denis; and my beads from Loretto; and many a thing that I would fain have saved sooner than your letter; letter indeed! no great thing, I warrant; what would it signify if twenty such were burned?"

I thought I should have gone mad; and I do believe that such would have been the consummation, if the prioress had not ordered that dreadful old woman to leave the room, which she did, grumbling the whole way, as if she had suffered the misfortune, and not I, "Letter indeed! tooth of St. Denis, worth a thousand of it!" till the door closed behind her.

"The letter is lost, my son," said the prioress; "and as it cannot be recovered from the element which has devoured it, you should not make yourself unhappy on that score. What between our own faults, and our own mistakes, if we grieve but for those things which can be amended, we shall have enough to do."

"But, my dear lady," I replied, "you do not seem to understand the full value of that letter; for here in a strange country, with no possible clue to guide me, how shall I discover those dear connexions, who are now separated from me; if, as you say, you can give me no information concerning their present abode?"

"None can I give, my son," replied the superior; "but I think they spoke of Paris. Yet, surely, before you parted, you must have arranged some means of learning each other's movements, in that wide horrible place the world. I would not tread it for a month alone, without some one to guide me, to be Abbess of Clairvaux."

"When I left them, lady," I replied, "I had not the most distant idea that they would change their dwelling ere my return. I was always sure to find your community somewhere; and I never doubted that I should have found the Lady Margaret and the Lady Emily with you. Can you not favour me by any explanation of the motives which induced them to leave your house, before my return from England?"

"What reasons the gentleman gave, I cannot tell," replied the prioress. "But certainly he seemed to have a very great influence over them."

"Whom do you mean, lady? What gentleman?" I exclaimed, in unmingled astonishment. "I know of no gentleman who ought to guide their movements but myself."

"They seemed to think differently, my son," replied the prioress, apparently getting tired of the conversation, "for they left my care under his protection: and set out in a carriage provided for them by him; that is all I can tell you."

Could it be my brother? I asked myself, though the very question was agony. Could it be my brother; and could Emily really have gone away under his guidance? Gracious Heaven! was it possible? "Was he young or old, madam?" I demanded, with as much calmness as I could assume.

"He was neither far advanced in life, nor yet to be called young," replied the superior. "He was probably my own age, or thereabout."

If the first part of the good lady's answer had almost made me despair, the second, though it left me as much in doubt as ever, took from my mind the sting of jealousy at least; and I proceeded to ask several more questions concerning the stranger; and also in regard to the period at which he had first made his appearance.

"You question somewhat rudely and somewhat long, my son," replied the lady of the Ursulines, giving way to her impatience. "I will now tell you all about it in my own way, and with that you must be satisfied, for I will not submit to be catechised, as if I were before a synod. About a week since, the gentleman I speak of came to the grate and demanded to see the Lady Margaret Langleigh; and she being a boarder, he was conducted to the parlour. After a long conversation alone, the Lady Emily was sent for; and shortly after, having finished the devotions in which I was engaged, I also went into the parlour. I found the younger lady all in tears; but they were evidently not tears of sorrow; and the gentleman who was a person of great courtesy and elegance, then told me it was his intention to take away the ladies with him the next day, adding: 'This diamond, madam, I beg you to accept, for the kindness and attention you have shown them; and though I know the gauds and baubles of this world are forbidden to you, who set your thoughts and wishes upon crowns of glory and imperishable goods, yet let me beg you to employ it as you may judge best.'"

The good prioress, as she related this circumstance, gave a slight bridling toss of her head, with a glance at the superior of the friendly convent, and then instantly proceeded. "Well, when he was gone, I did ask the Lady Emily and the Lady Margaret also, who the stranger was; but there seemed to me some mystery, and as I have no curiosity for things of the world, I, of course, inquired no farther. Nor was the portress able to discover, though she asked very carefully, nor could

Father Antoine, our holy director, find out who the stranger was ; and yet having some business at the inn, where the other lodged, he inquired accidentally if the aubergiste knew him. The next day, at noon, the stranger came again with a carriage and grey horses, in which he carried away the two ladies, who left a letter for you with the portress. Had they chosen to confide it to me, doubtless it might have been cared for ; but they did as they pleased, and that is all I can tell you, young gentleman."

"If you knew, madam, how much I am concerned in all that has passed," I replied, "and what embarrassment and anxiety the loss of this letter causes me, I am sure you would, in Christian charity, give me every information which could lead me to trace the dear friends I have lost."

"Oh, I am willing—quite willing to tell you anything I know, my son," answered the old lady ; but I saw that some offence had been given, probably by the reserve which Emily and Lady Margaret had displayed ; and I therefore contented myself with asking if the stranger were an Englishman or a Frenchman.

"Oh, a Frenchman, he appeared, certainly," replied the superior. "He was so courteous and polite. Yet he might have a little accent, too," she added, "though he spoke French like a native."

As it was evident that I was to expect no farther information, I now rose, and taking leave, returned to my inn in a state of mind not easy to conceive. Casting myself down on a seat, I leaned my head upon the table, and endeavoured to collect and arrange my ideas ; but for some time my brain remained in such a state of inextricable confusion, between want of sleep, agitation, alarm, and suspense, that no idea remained clear and precise before my mind for a single instant. The boy stood near, and gazed upon me wistfully, as if he would fain have asked the tidings which I had obtained ; and, at length, I gave him, in a quick and hurried manner, a sketch of what I had learned.

"Is that all ?" he cried, bounding towards the door, with that rapidity of conclusion and action which he had learned in the camp. "Is that all ? I thought they were all dead ! Oh, we shall soon find them ;—a carriage must be a rare thing in a town like this ; and we shall trace it along the road as easily as a slow hound follows his game." So saying, he darted away. Remembering, however, that he had scarcely an idea of the language of the country, but what he had been able to acquire on the road, I hastened after him, and overtook him in the inn yard. He had already collected round him half a dozen hostlers and grooms and drawers ; and with a piece of chalk,

was busily sketching on the wall a very tolerable representation of a carriage and horses ; while he tried by sundry words and broken phrases of mixed French and English, to make them comprehend his desire to know where the vehicle he portrayed had gone.

My coming put an end to such elaborate procedure ; and following the course the boy had suggested, I demanded whether a gentleman had put up there about six or seven days previously, with a carriage and two grey horses ? To an immediate reply in the affirmative, was joined the information that he had four instead of two grey horses, and was accompanied by two stout fellows on horseback, from which I augured more news still ; as how much soever the master might be given to taciturnity, it was more than probable that one or other of his lackeys had been more communicative, and given some account of their journey, or their dwelling, or their designs ; which might furnish a clue to their route. In this I was disappointed. Every one remembered the carriage, and the horses, and the gentleman, and his servants ; but every one also remembered that never had such a reserved party entered the gates of the *Cheval blanc* ; and all assured me that not one word had passed the lips of any of them concerning their object or intentions, except when on one occasion, the younger of the grooms declared that he hoped soon to see Paris again. This, however, was some news, and my next questions tended to ascertain the appearance of the master of these horses and grooms ; but on this subject, the servants of the inn referred me to the aubergiste himself, as more eloquent than themselves ; and to him I consequently made application.

The gentleman, the aubergiste said, who possessed the coach, was somewhere between fifty and sixty, perhaps dipped in his fifty-fifth year. He was sober in his habit ; and wore a coat the colour of vin de Medoc, garnished with silver ; he was tall, muscular, and florid in complexion. He was gay and sparkling, too, in manner, the innkeeper farther said, larded his conversation now and then with a *bon mot*, or a good story, but never spoke of himself by any chance, and though he ate but sparingly, he drank in reason, and always of the best.

This account left me as wise as I was before ; for no one within the sphere of my personal recollection bore the slightest resemblance to the person here described, that is to say, as far as the innkeeper's description differed from that which might have been given of any other individual of the human race. Doubtful, anxious, and perplexed, a choice of difficulties lay before me. Beyond all question, Emily's letter, which had been destroyed, would have given me directions where to find

her, and would also have explained the circumstances under which she had left the asylum that I had chosen for her; but, at the same time, she would of course expect me to follow whither she had gone; and might or might not write again, to insure my knowledge of her abode. If I left the town, any letter she sent might again be lost; and if I remained to wait for more news, I might lose all trace of her farther journey. Where there is but a choice of evils before an anxious mind, I believe the one which implies inactivity will be always rejected; and I determined at all risks to seek Emily Langleigh in Paris. As far as possible, however, to guard against the risk of missing any communication she might direct to me, I placed two pieces of gold in the aubergiste's hands, telling him to make inquiries every day of the portress of the Ursuline nuns, for any letters which might be there left for me; and in the case of the arrival of any, to forward it to me by a courier, to an inn I had heard my father mention, in the immediate vicinity of the Place Royale. If I received none, I told him, that I should return at the end of two months, and claim my forty-eight livres, but if he forwarded any to me, I bade him keep the money as a reward; and promised to pay the expenses of the messenger. His own interest was thus bound to my side; and forty-eight livres is a sum which a French innkeeper does not despise, nor an English one either.

My next proceeding was to acquire the most complete and accurate knowledge that it was possible to obtain, of the carriage, the horses, the liveries. The aubergiste described the coach with the most minute precision; the garçon d'écurie informed me of every spot upon the horses' skins; and the fille de cuisine, gave me a particular account of the liveries. The road the whole party had taken, after pausing for half an hour at the Ursuline convent, and being joined by two ladies, was decidedly that which led towards Paris; for which information I was indebted to a deformed idiot, one of the invariable hangers on of a French inn. He had followed the coach, praying for sous, even after he had obtained several; and the same intense cupidity which had led to his acquiring the information, easily induced him to part with it, though in somewhat garbled form. Thus far prepared for my search—though that was little enough certainly—I mounted my horse, with little Ball-o'-fire; and set out from Dinan, bending my steps towards Paris. I had entered that town with all my anticipations as bright as summer daylight. All uncertain as was the future, imagination and hope had revelled over it as if it were a field of flowers. But expectation is almost always false. If she hold us forth a cup overflowing with sweets, Fate stands behind and dashes it from our

lips ; and if she point to the gathering clouds that hang threatening over our heads, accident raises some kind wind that wafts them far away.

I had entered Dinan full of hope and delight ; I quitted it with those hopes all melted into air. How far those hopes were afterwards renewed, and how far they were again dissipated, shall be told hereafter, if Heaven gives me life and leisure to conclude this sketch of my history.

Nota bene. Here endeth the private history of that honourable gentleman, Henry Masterton, as written by his own hand ; what followeth being compiled by me, John Woolsanger, A.M., in the year of grace 1675—6, from authentic sources, as shall be shown hereafter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE eager blood of youth thrilled through all the veins of Henry Masterton as he urged his horse forward on the road leading towards Paris. Disappointment is to youth but a renewal of hope ; and riding on for Fougères, the idea of losing sight of Emily Langleigh gradually yielded to the expectation of overtaking her, as he spoke anxiously with his page on the means to be taken in order to leave no possible chance of mistaking the way she had followed. Such conversation was broken by long though fertile musings on the cause of her departure from Dinan, by speculations concerning the person who had apparently influenced her to remove from the asylum in which he had left her, and by many a vain effort of memory to find a reason for the occurrences of the present in the facts of the past.

At every little auberge on the road, where it seemed likely that such an equipage as that which carried the object of his search would pause, either to water the horses or to refresh the travellers, Henry halted to make inquiries ; and of course various were the answers he received from the different aubergistes and their servants. Some gave him prompt and satisfactory information. Some had no memories but for the present day, and the thumb-screw would not have squeezed out of them any information of things that had passed six days before ; and some, though slow and stupid at first, tardily pumped up, at length, the tidings he wanted, from the bottom of their deep-sunk minds. Upon the whole, however, the line of information

remained clear as far as Fougères, to which place Emily had certainly been carried, but in towns where there were several inns, the search became more difficult; for Henry found it an invariable rule that one innkeeper never by any chance knew anything that had happened at the house of another; and if the king and all his court had lodged for a week at the Boule d'Or at Fougères, the landlord of the Grand St. Martin would have taken care to know nothing about it. The only resource of the young cavalier was to inquire at each whether the equipage he described had put up there, and only to dismount at that where the information was clear. At Fougères this happened at the Boule d'Or; and there Henry obtained a full and particular description of Emily and Lady Margaret, and the gentleman who accompanied them, who was designated by the aubergiste's wife as *un bel homme*, adding, "*La belle tête, que sa tête!*"

There is a peculiar and curious sort of restiveness in the human mind, which makes it on many occasions kick against conviction; and in a thousand instances where our reason tells us to be perfectly sure, a lingering doubt of we know not what, will often hang about our mind, in despite of judgment and feeling, and common sense.

Although jealousy of Emily Langleigh was totally out of all question of calm consideration, yet this description of her companion did not give Henry all the pleasure which doubtless the landlady purposed. When the excitement of quick riding, and expectation, and inquiry was over, and he lay in darkness and silence on his bed at Fougères, melancholy again took possession of him, and he conjured up a thousand vague and shadowy miseries to haunt the time till he could fall asleep. He now fancied one thing, and now another; he imagined many a specious scheme which might have been used to lure her away; in his own mind he did many a little injustice to Lady Margaret, and even to Emily herself: he was sorry he had ever left her; he was sorry that he had not bound her by a promise not to quit Dinan till his return; and he reproached himself for not providing for all contingencies, without calling to mind that it was impossible to have foreseen them. He remembered, too, the interest the Benedictine, whom he had met at Monsieur de Vitray's, had taken in her he loved, and the knowledge that he appeared to have of her being in France; and no small regret passed through the mind of the young traveller for not having in the first place sought out the monk, and made him give all the information that he possessed. It was too late now, however, to turn; and as he was to meet him in Paris, he resolved to make his first application to him, if he did not discover Emily herself previously.

Early the next morning both master and page were on horseback, and spurring on for Mayenne, which, as the road then lay, was a tolerable day's journey for a horse. At the last watering-house, however, no tidings of the cavalcade were to be obtained, and in the town itself the young cavalier inquired in vain at every inn which the place afforded. No news of Emily were to be obtained; no such carriage and servants had been seen, and Henry was in despair. His horse was weary, but still the day was not so far advanced but that he might reach Alençon, by borrowing an hour or two from the night; and pausing at Mayenne only to feed the two steeds, he proceeded as fast as possible on his way. Although it was dark, the gates were not yet shut when he reached Alençon, and inquiring of the concierge for the best auberge, he was directed to the *Bras de Fer*. His first inquiry as he alighted in the court was, whether the persons he sought had been there within the last week? and to his no small joy, he found that they had only quitted that very inn two mornings before. They were travelling very slowly, the aubergiste said, and were certainly going to Paris, so that monsieur, if he were so disposed, might easily overtake them before they reached the capital.

These tidings were happy ones indeed, and well repaid his disappointment at Mayenne. His horse, of course, was his next care, and after having personally attended to the refreshment of his weary beast, he returned to the house, satisfied that it would be able to pursue its journey the next day. When he set out, however, early in the morning, the animal was still stiff with the long journeys of the two preceding days; and though it became fresher as it warmed with exercise, yet before it had gone twenty miles it was again dreadfully tired. Obligated to slacken his pace, the young cavalier rode slowly on with all the melancholy attending upon a tired horse, while the tormenting steeple of Verneuil, still at ten miles' distance, rose towering above every other object, tall, stiff, and monumental, without ever appearing to grow an inch nearer. At length, however, he reached that little town, and had again the satisfaction of finding that he had gained another day upon those whom he sought to overtake. The whole cavalcade had but quitted the place that morning; and as he now ascertained that they travelled little more than fifteen or twenty miles each day, he doubted not that before the following evening he should once more hold Emily to his heart.

Every other feeling but that of joy was now forgotten; and though, to say truth, more than once on his journey, when weary and disappointed he found his inquiries vain and his pursuit baffled, he had mentally reproached Emily for quitting at all, till

he returned, the asylum he had provided for her, he now remembered nothing but the glad anticipation of once more beholding her, and consoled himself for all his pains with the bright assurances which expectation so often heaps upon *to-morrow*.

At the end of that strange eventful thing—human life, perhaps we may have an opportunity of balancing accounts with the great promise-breaker—Hope; and in truth a sad catalogue of disappointments must the very happiest of men have to lay to her charge. Again Henry Masterton set out from Verneuil with expectations high raised, and a bosom full of bright dreams; but before he reached Dreux, his horse once more showed signs of great fatigue, and as it came down the steep hill, a little beyond Nonancourt, the poor animal stumbled and fell. The rider pulled it up in an instant, but its knees were cut to pieces, and it could do no more than proceed to the town which lay before it.

At Dreux the young cavalier was tantalised with the news that the carriage, for which he inquired had set out from that place not three hours before, but the landlord of the inn would part with none of his horses; and all impatient as he was, Henry Masterton had but the choice of sending for a horse-dealer, whom the aubergiste recommended as *the most honest man in the world*, or taking the post, which, as it never went above five miles an hour, would of course delay him greatly, in the first instance, though it might facilitate his movements in the end, by enabling him to continue his journey without interruption. As present speed, however, was his great object, he sent immediately for *the most honest man in the world*, who, of course, proved a great rogue; and, seeing that he had to do with one who had no time to spare in bargaining, demanded not only ten times more for his horses than they were worth, but far more than Henry's finances could afford to disburse. The post, therefore, became his only resource, and proceeding thither, he was instantly furnished with two stout beasts for his boy and himself, and, accompanied by a postilion, set out once more for Paris.

The inducement of a livre or two to the postilion, put the horses into a quicker pace, and, a little before they reached the town of Montford, they caught sight of a carriage ascending one of the opposite hills. Their journey now became a race, and they soon gained the top of the ascent, over which they had seen the object of their pursuit making its slow way. By this time the carriage was down at the bottom of the declivity on the other side, and, before they had reached the valley, it was again over a lesser hill beyond. When the horsemen arrived at the top of that also, they perceived the vehicle about a

quarter of a mile in advance, brought to a halt, while one of the servants arranged some part of the harness which had broken or gone wrong. To the surprise and disappointment of Henry Masterton, however, they could now clearly perceive that the colour of the horses was brown, not grey, and, when he rode up and looked in—still in the hopes that some accident might have caused such a change—he saw that the carriage was only tenanted by a goodly dame of fifty, who filled, and filled compactly, one whole side, while an abigail, of younger date, and slimmer proportions, sat like a single thin book on a spacious book-shelf, the only occupant of the opposite seat. The boots, or *portières*, as they are called in France, and which might each have held two persons more, were vacant.

The cavalier and his followers had now again recourse to the spur, and many was the straining glance that Henry Masterton cast over the country before him. At each *relais*, and at every inn, he pursued his inquiries more and more eagerly; for apprehensions, by no means unreasonable, began to take possession of his mind, lest now, as he was approaching the capital, amidst the numerous vehicles with which the highways were frequented, and the number of cross-roads by which the country was intersected, he might lose all trace of the party which he had thus far followed successfully.

Continual and more circumstantial news of the events which were taking place in the neighbourhood of Paris, than had been known in the distant province from which he came, now reached him also; and he found that the court and army were at St. Germain, while Paris, declared to be in a state of siege, was held out by the Parliament and by a party called the Fronde. The country between the two cities, and, in fact, the whole environs of the capital for five or six miles' distance from the walls, were in a complete state of disorganization, and seemed reserved as a general field for skirmishes and petty contentions, very different from the fierce and sanguinary struggles that had been taking place in England. Brothers, and relatives, and friends, indeed, met each other arrayed in deadly arms, but laughter, and jest, and merriment, mingled with the strife, and much more wit than blood was expended in the quarrel. Not that animosities and hatreds were wholly banished; for every now and then a bloody rencontre took place, which proved that both parties did not *always* run away, as sometimes happened; but these more serious encounters were as much a matter of laughter to both the city and the court, as the more frivolous engagements. The wounded made epigrams upon themselves, and the survivors satirised their dead companions.

Such news, however, was not calculated to quiet the mind of

the lover, in regard to the fate of Emily Langleigh, nor did the state of the country, which he was now entering, at all favour his farther search. The tidings that he obtained, indeed, became more and more vague at every step. Some of the persons to whom he addressed his inquiries, declared that fifty such carriages as he described had passed that day; others vowed that there had been none. Some pretended to remember such a one, evidently without having remarked it correctly; and others turned away sullenly, and would hardly give any answer to his questions.

The numbers which he now began to meet, announced the proximity of the capital, and near each small town he encountered parties of armed horsemen. Carriages and foot passengers, bourgeois and paysan were seen; not taking their evening pastime after the fatigues of the day were over; but, some hastening here and there with busy countenances, and some laughing and singing with military indifference; though all evidently the subjects of a land ill at ease, in which the sword had usurped an unwonted ascendancy over the ploughshare.

From six o'clock in the morning, until near four in the afternoon, Henry Masterton had scarcely been out of the saddle for a moment, and, by the time he arrived at the little deserted town of Versailles, both darkness and weariness compelled him to stop. By this time he had lost all trace of Emily Langleigh, and had become almost hopeless of finding her, except through such information as he could gain from the Benedictine. To reach Paris, therefore, was his immediate purpose, and alighting at a small cabaret at Versailles, he sent for the landlord to demand what was the state of the city, and what formalities were required to obtain an entrance, as he understood that it was in actual siege.

"Ah! good faith, no great siege goes on, sir," replied the innkeeper; "you may find your way into it as easily as into that *paté*. The Frondeurs pretend to demand a pass, but it is never exacted, and if you like to wait till to-morrow morning, I will send my son with you, who will easily obtain admission. Two gentlemen and their servants dined here this morning, going to Monsieur D'Elbeuf, one of their generals. They set out two hours since, and are in Paris by this time. One of them was a monk, by the way; and they get in and out everywhere."

To have attempted to proceed that night might have proved dangerous in more ways than one, and the young cavalier took his seat in the kitchen of the inn, and endeavoured to obtain some information in regard to the carriage which he had traced so far. Here, also, he was disappointed, although the aubergiste, with much greater civility than he had generally met with,

sent out to inquire particularly at all the houses of public entertainment in the town, whether such an equipage had arrived at any of them, or had been seen to pass through by any one. In return for this kindness, it is true, he required the young traveller to *sit down* at least, to a very splendid supper, for which he had no great inclination, and to drink his best wine, to which he pressed him with somewhat egotistical commendations of the vintage.

Henry easily understood the terms on which his civility was granted, and subscribed to them with a good grace. He even went so far as to buy a horse, for which the landlord, who was a man of honour and conscience, did not ask him above four louis more than the just value, and which matched very well with the steed of little Ball-o'-fire, that, lightened of both its burdens, the boy and the valise, had been led after them from Verneuil to Versailles.

Gloomy and anxious, indeed, were the thoughts of the young wanderer, when he retired to his own chamber; but circumstanced as he was, deprived of almost every clue to the discovery of her he loved, an exile from his own country, and an unfriended stranger in a foreign land, his gloom would probably have been greater, had he not been enlivened, in some degree, by the bright tone of daring hope which the mind of his little companion never seemed to lose under any difficulty or danger.

"Nothing is irretrievable but death; nothing is lost but what is at the bottom of the sea;" was the boy's favourite axiom. And he spoke so surely of finding the Lady Emily in Paris—the dear, the beautiful Lady Emily, whom he loved so much—that Henry Masterton himself began to take his words for prophecies.

Weariness and exhaustion did the part of a mind at ease, and he slept soundly through the night; nor, probably, would have woke till late the next morning, had not the orders he had given to rouse him at seven been punctually observed. He found his breakfast prepared also; and by the time he had concluded that, his horse was brought saddled to the door, with the son of the landlord ready to pilot him into Paris. After paying his debt, which very nearly brought his gold to a conclusion, he once more sprang into the saddle, and set out for the capital. Following the son of the aubergiste, a boy of thirteen or fourteen, Henry and his page left the immediate high-road, and by a variety of circuitous paths approached that entrance of the great city which the guide deemed safest. From the edge of one of the hills, they soon caught a view of a sea of spires and buildings, occupying a large space in the beautiful plain, through which the Seine winds onward on its course; and a body of

cavalry manœuvring without the walls, showed that the strife of which those fields were so continually the scene, had already begun for the day.

Continuing in the narrow road which they were then pursuing, the party approached nearer and more near to the city, whose naturally feeble defences had been strengthened by some out-works, both towards the river and the plain. It was opposite to one of these that Henry Masterton found himself, when the path opened out upon a piece of fine grass-land, only broken in one place by a copse of low wood, and commanded by a sort of ravelin that had been thrown up before the wall of the town.

"Now," said the lad who led the way, "we must get behind that mound, and then I know the captain of the quarter, who will let us in." Thus saying, he led the way along one face of the ravelin, which appeared to be perfectly without guard or sentry; and began to approach a part where the work was still imperfect. A slight sound, however, from the copse on the left, called the attention of the young cavalier who followed him; and turning round, he saw a file of musketeers draw out from behind, and advance quickly towards the very spot where he stood. He instantly pointed them out to the lad, who, after gazing at them for a moment, without speaking a word, set spurs to his horse and galloped away as fast as his beast would carry him. Henry was about to follow, but as he turned his horse, a long line of heads was raised on the other side of the ravelin, and a glistening row of firelocks appeared levelled against the musketeers, who were coming up at a quick charge.

It was evident enough, even to so young a soldier as Henry Masterton, that he had arrived at an unfortunate moment, when a body of the Royalists were about to attempt the surprise of one of the Parisian defences, which was generally left unguarded; and that he himself was directly in the line of fire of both parties. The unfinished opening in the ravelin was the nearest means of escape from a struggle in which he had no interest; and towards it he pushed his horse as fast as possible, having not the slightest disposition to mingle in the strife that was about to take place. Before he reached it, however, the advancing corps, finding the outwork unexpectedly occupied by a considerable force, wavered and halted in full career, at about seventy yards from the ravelin. The Parisians instantly availed themselves of their enemy's confusion. A musket at the head of the line was discharged, a rapid blaze of fire ran along the whole face of the ravelin, and with a sensation, as if a red hot iron had been driven into his shoulder, Henry Masterton fell from his horse between the two lines. He instantly started on his feet again, and caught his horse by the bridle, but he felt very sick and faint, and in a moment, without knowing why, he

sank again to the ground, while little Ball-o'-fire springing to his side, tied his scarf tightly over his master's shoulder, to stay the effusion of blood from a severe wound. Scarcely had he performed his task, when the Parisians, whose first fire had thrown the attacking party into no small confusion, followed up their advantage by issuing forth from their ravelin, and drove the assailants in confusion over the plain. This feat was performed while the page still knelt by his master; but at length, seeing the victorious party returning towards their works, the boy started up with his habitual knowledge of battle-fields, exclaiming, "They'll be for plundering the baggage!" and unstrapping the valise, he fled like the wind into the little copse-wood, which had covered the approach of the Royalists.

The Frondeurs returned, laughing and singing, but their merriment did not argue any true gentleness of nature; and twenty or thirty made for the spot where the young Englishman lay unable to raise himself from the ground. As they advanced, one of them calmly set his foot on the breast of an unhappy musketeer—who had fallen at the first volley, and who seemed hardly yet dead—exclaiming, as he did so—

"Monsieur s'en dort,
Non, non, il est mort.
Tan, tan, ta ran tan, ta ra!"

The eyes of the young cavalier were fixed upon that spot; and faint with loss of blood, the fearful levity which mingled with the brutality of the action he beheld, overcame all the strength he had left. He became as sick as death—the whole world seemed to swim round with him for a moment—a thick mist came over his eyes, and he saw no more.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEN Henry Masterton once more opened his eyes to the light of day, he found himself in a situation well calculated to make him close them again as soon as possible. He was surrounded by about twenty of the lowest Frondeurs, who seemed absolutely drunk with their success in repelling the attack on the ravelin. One was stirring him rudely with his foot, while another was busily engaged in adjusting a rope to his neck, in such a manner as to leave no doubt of their intention of ending by the cord what life the shot had left him.

"He's awake! he's awake!" shouted a third. "Away with

him! away with the spy! Hang all spies up as high as Mont-faucon! Away with him!"

"Where shall we hang him?" cried the one who was so busy about the poor youth's throat: "Where shall we hang him?"

"To the creneau by the Port St. Antoine!" replied one of the others. "But quick! quick! or we may be stayed."

"Hold, hold! gentlemen," cried the young cavalier, in a faint voice. "In the name of Heaven, whom do you take me for?"

"For a villanous spy, who would have betrayed us to the enemy," cried a dozen voices at once. "Away with him! away with him!"

"You are wrong! you are mistaken, on my honour! on my soul!" exclaimed the unhappy traveller. "I came but yesterday from Brittany, and was but trying to find the easiest means of entering the city."

"Ay, doubtless, doubtless!" shouted the Frondeurs. "But you wanted to take a whole regiment with you."

"Did we not see you sneak along the ravelin?" cried one.

"Did we not see you lead on the white scarfs?" cried another. "Away with him! away with him!" and drowning his expostulations in shouts, they raised him up from the ground, and while one man held him up in torture by the wounded arm, and another supported him under the other, a third pulled him on by the rope round his neck, and waving their hats with the mad exultation of an excited multitude, they dragged him on towards one of the great gates of the city.

The pain of his wound was intense, and the loss of blood he had suffered great; but yet he fainted not, for there was a dreadful excitement in his situation, which kept him alive to all that was passing round him, though his heart sank, and his brain turned round. Never to see Emily Langleigh more—to die the death of a dog in a strange land, at the very moment he was likely to have overtaken her—to leave her to chance and accident without knowing her fate! Such were some of the thoughts that mingled with the natural abhorrence of death, and the shrinking of an honourable heart from a fate reserved for the lowest malefactors.

He suffered them to drag him forward unopposed, for there was a degree of pride in the bosom of the young cavalier which would not allow him to beg any more for life at the hands of the low villains that were about to assassinate him. "You are condemning your own souls by staining your hands with the blood of an innocent man," was all he deigned to say to those who forced him onward; to which they only shouted a reply of scorn, and urged him forward towards the Port St. Antoine. There, throwing the rope round a projecting part of the stone-

work, one of the Frondeurs climbed up with some difficulty to fix it so as to prevent it from slipping, while two or three more placed the unhappy cavalier under the precise spot, and a number of others prepared to draw the opposite end of the cord.

While these fatal preparations were in progress, a gay and gallant troop of horsemen issued out of the city gate, but took no farther notice of what was passing close by them than by asking what the other group was about?

"Only hanging a spy, monseigneur! only hanging a spy!" shouted one of the Frondeurs to the gentleman who had asked the question.

"Let us stop and see the operation," cried the horseman, turning to his companions; "if well and skilfully performed, 'tis a delicate and brilliant piece of work—but, I fear me, these fellows will bungle it. For the honour of France, my good friend," he continued, speaking laughingly to a gentleman who rode beside him, "for the honour of France, we ought to send for Monsieur le Bourreau, and take it out of the hands of such *maladroits*!"

At that moment the gentleman, to whom he spoke, felt something pull his riding coat violently; and, looking down, beheld a boy who had mingled unperceived with his company; and who, alternately clasping his hands, and pointing to the scene before them, seemed to implore most piteously his interference.

"Nom de Dieu!" exclaimed the gentleman, in French; "you here, little page! Where is your master? Where is Monsieur Masterton?"

The boy answered nothing, but continued pointing forward eagerly with his hand; and at length, seeing that the other did not comprehend, he laid his grasp upon the horse's bridle, and led it forward a few steps towards the wall, still pointing onward. Suddenly the cavalier shook the bridle from his hold, dashed his spurs into his horse's sides, and, galloping forward like lightning amongst the men on foot, who had nearly by this time completed their preparations, he laid about him with his sword in the most indiscriminate manner, striking down one, and cutting at another, much to the surprise of his companions, whom he had left on the little mound, where first they had taken their stand.

Finding themselves thus assailed by a single man, the Frondeurs, though scattered back from their prisoner by the first onset, were about to show some resistance, and more than one musket was unslung, when the rest of the horsemen came down at an easy canter to the scene of the affray.

"What is the matter? what is the matter?" cried he, who

seemed their chief; "why, mon cher De Vitray, you have spoiled the hanging!"

"Vive Dieu!" exclaimed Monsieur de Vitray, for it was no other, who had come so timely to the aid of the young cavalier; "Vive Dieu! they were going to hang my phoenix of an Englishman, who can be no more a spy than I am. Ah, coquins!" he cried, shaking his sword at the Frondeurs; "is it thus ye show yourselves Frenchmen? Know that the true character of your nation is generous hospitality towards all strangers, calm and tender consideration before you proceed to acts of violence, gentle and magnanimous humanity when the combat is over, as well as noble and fearless daring in it. This is the true character of Frenchmen; but such villains as you are would send forth into the world a very different report of our nation."

"But mon cher De Vitray," said the chief of the cavaliers, "we must inquire into this business—we must not really deprive our dearly beloved partisans of the pleasure of hanging a gentleman, without we find the gentleman has some good cause to assign why he should not be hanged. There—there—do not let that boy untie him so fast; for it is much more easy to keep the stag than to catch him."

"Monseigneur le Duc d'Elbeuf," replied De Vitray, making him a low bow, and laying his hand upon his heart, "I pledge you my honour that this gentleman cannot be a spy, as these vile roturiers call him. He left my dwelling in Bretagne not above six days ago. I, who travelled with all speed, in answer to your highness's summons, only arrived last night, so that he cannot have been here two days, however fast he might come. There must be some mistake. Permit me to alight and discover what it is."

"Good faith, I will alight too, and be at the opening of the wallet," replied the duke. "Here, Mezier, hold the horse."

The bourgeois guard, who had so nearly terminated all the adventures of the young cavalier, had suspended their demonstrations of hostility towards Monsieur de Vitray on the approach of the other horsemen, but still stood at a little distance glaring upon their victim, whose limbs had been by this time freed by the eager hands of little Ball-o'-fire.

Henry, however, was still totally unable to move from the exhausting agony of his wound and the loss of blood he had sustained. He lay, therefore, on the grass, where the boy unbound him, while Monsieur de Vitray, the Duc d'Elbeuf, and several noblemen and gentlemen who accompanied him, crowded round. The circumstances of his situation were explained in a few words, and his innocence of all intention of acting as a spy clearly established to the satisfaction of all.

"Pardi! I have a great inclination, De Vitray," said the Duc

d'Elbeuf, who at that time acted as generalissimo for the parliament of Paris, "I have a great inclination to make the rope these fellows were about to use serve to hang up some of themselves, for they well deserve it."

"I pray you, monseigneur, do not think of it," said Henry, in a faint voice; "they hardly deserve such severe treatment as that."

"Oh, not for seeking to hang you, sir Englishman," replied the duke, laughing, with the idle levity of the times, "but for beating the enemy before we came. You must know that we were proceeding to seek these very gentlemen whom our friends here have scared away.—Get ye gone, knaves," he added, turning to the foot soldiers; "get ye gone, and next time you want to hang some one, choose him from amongst yourselves. It will be rare luck, in that case, if you fall upon an honest man. Away with ye! get ye gone! Come, De Vitray, what wilt thou do now? Wilt thou come and play at rackets? Wilt thou go and storm St. Denis? Wilt thou away and harangue the parliament?"

"By your good leave, monseigneur," replied De Vitray, "I will see my young friend here safely bestowed: for, as you may perceive, he is badly wounded; that done, I will join your highness where you will, and do what you will, for the honour of France—which is indeed a country, for whose inestimable excellence over every other country on the face of the earth, we can never do enough to show ourselves grateful to Heaven, by proving ourselves worthy of the benefit."

"Well, then, meet me at the palace in an hour," replied the duke, laughing, "and by that time I will have devised something pertinent, to prove ourselves inestimably grateful, for the inestimable benefit of being the inestimable children of this inestimable country. Fare thee well, till then; stay with the wounded man, and I will send thee a brancard to carry him to thy hotel."

"I know not whether that mad duke will keep his word," said De Vitray, as the Duke of Elbeuf rode away, leaving him, and three servants who accompanied him, with the young cavalier and his page; "it's just like him either to forget, or never to send, for the joke's sake. Hie thee in, too, Jacques, and fetch out a brancard to carry in our young friend."

The Duc d'Elbeuf, however, kept his word, and, before the return of the servant, two stout Parisian porters appeared carrying a board fixed upon handles, and covered with matting, on which Henry Masterton was raised and borne into the city. The hotel of Monsieur de Vitray was some way off, and the pain of being borne so far through the close streets of a town, brought so dreadful a thirst on the wounded man that he was

obliged to ask for drink several times as they proceeded. Closing his eyes as much as possible—for the very passing objects, as they flitted by him, were painful to him in the feverish irritation which he now felt—Henry saw little of the city through which he was carried; and it was only as he entered the hotel of his kind friend that he looked up and beheld a handsome court-yard, with a number of servants, who, taking the tone of their master, as is ever the case, crowded round to lend every assistance that was in their power.

Laid on a soft and easy bed, and refreshed with some wine and water, the young cavalier obtained a degree of relief; but this was only temporary, for the arrival of a surgeon soon condemned him once more to exquisite torture in the extraction of the ball, which had lodged deep among the bones and muscles of the shoulder. It was long before it could be withdrawn, but, from the moment that it was so, he experienced comparative ease, and the man of healing declared that, with perfect quiet and care, the wound, though certainly dangerous, was not likely to prove mortal.

The curtains of his bed were drawn, the windows darkened, and exhaustion overpowered both pain and anxiety; he fell into a profound sleep, long, deep, death-like. At first the surgeon, who visited him a few hours afterwards, judged this slumber a favourable symptom: but he began to change his opinion as a bright red spot appeared on the invalid's cheek, while the restless tossing which, after a time, took possession of his whole frame, spoke high inflammation in the wounded part, and fever through the whole system. At length the young Englishman opened his eyes, but it was without one recollection, of where he was, or who were the persons near him. His language was incoherent and rude, his eyes flaming, and his struggles to rise those of a madman. "Where was his Emily?" he demanded: "why did they keep his Emily from him? They might conceal her where they liked, but he would find her if she were above the earth:" and then again he insisted upon being permitted to rise, that he might go to the Benedictine convent in the Quartier St. Jacques; none could tell him where she was but Dom André, and to him he would go.

As he spoke in English, not one word of what he said was understood by any of those who attended him, except his faithful attendant little Ball-o'-fire, who never quitted his bedside, but who was unluckily incompetent to translate his master's desires to those around. At length, however, Monsieur de Vitray, who visited his chamber frequently, and tried to console him with the information that the air of France was peculiarly salutary and efficacious in curing wounds, caught the words "*Quartier St. Jacques*,"—"Dom André," repeated several times in the

ravings of the invalid; and, with the minute and delicate kindness which he displayed on every occasion, he sent with all speed for the Benedictine, who had been, as it happened, the companion of his journey to Paris.

The monk came without loss of time, and approached the bedside of the wounded man. "Where is Emily?" exclaimed Henry, sitting up in spite of the efforts of his attendants; "where is my Emily? why do you keep her from me?"

"Ha!" cried the monk, in some surprise: "Ha! is it so? that might have been divined too;" and, sitting down by the wounded cavalier, he spoke to him for long in English; assured him that he should see his Emily as soon as he was well: and, with those kind and soothing words of hope, which have an influence on madness itself, he prevailed on him to lie down again and keep himself calm and silent. The inducement to tranquillity that he held out to him, whenever the delirium caused him to rave, was the expectation of seeing Emily sooner.

As long as he remained ill, the Benedictine said he could not hope to see her, and as his recovery depended upon his keeping quite quiet, every movement that he made, and every word that he uttered, would retard the accomplishment of his hopes. Such arguments were all efficacious upon an ear that was deaf to every other persuasion, and Henry continued calm and tranquil as long as the monk remained by his bedside. When he quitted him, however, which he was obliged to do in the course of the day, the raving returned upon him instantly; and it seemed that he had fixed his whole hopes of recovering Emily on the knowledge which the Benedictine possessed of her abode, and feared to see him depart, lest he also should elude his search.

The monk, on his part, appeared to take a deep interest in the fate of the young cavalier, and after leaving him for a short time, to communicate with his superior, he returned, and took up his abode at the dwelling of Monsieur de Vitray, devoting himself entirely to the care of the wounded man.

Nor was the tendance which he paid of that common kind, which an habitual devotion to the works of charity renders but mechanical in many of the religious orders of the Romish church. There seemed to be deeper and more powerful feelings mingled with his humanity, and as he sat beside the young cavalier, either when he slept or when he lay quiet beneath his eye, he would gaze fixedly upon him; and the traces of many deep emotions would pass over his countenance, like the shadows of clouds which, driven over a wide landscape, show that something dark and heavy is passing across the sky, and yet display not in the least its form or hue to those who do not look upon the sky itself. A bright and hectic flush, too, would at times

come up in his pale check, and then fade away again in a moment. At other times his brow would knit, and his eye would flash as if some fearful wrath had seized upon his heart, and he would cross himself devoutly, and murmur some brief prayer, as if to lay the demon that suddenly possessed him. Altogether, indeed, his minutest actions showed that his whole life was a fearful struggle between feelings and passions ungovernably strong, and the mild principles of a gentle and pacific creed. When contradicted, his eye would flash and his brow would darken, like the lightning and the cloud; but a moment—a single instant, would bring it all to an end; and yet that very brief heat might serve to show what would be the outbreking of feelings more potently aroused in the same bosom. Still he seemed to devote his whole mind to gentleness and kindness, and to strive, as men seldom strive, to conquer all that was harsh, or dark, or evil, in his own heart. To Henry he was calmness and charity itself; he bore with the irritability of sickness and the ragings of delirium, and, by the efforts of a strong mind, directed to so simple a task as soothing a sick and frenzied man, he kept him quiet when the voice of no one else had the slightest effect, and was rewarded by seeing, at the end of three days, the inflammation abate, and the fever begin to diminish.

Monsieur de Vitray himself was invariable in his kindness, and often visited his young friend; but by this time, at the persuasions of the Duc d'Elbeuf, he had taken a decided part in the intrigues and struggles of the Fronde, and with his peculiarities laughed at, his talents employed, and his purse borrowed, he passed the greater part of his time with the faction to which he had attached himself. Thus the care of the young cavalier fell principally upon the Benedictine and the page, who sat in silence the live-long day on the other side of his master's bed, ready to obey the slightest word of the monk, whose care and benevolence he seemed fully to appreciate.

From the pale and haggard countenance of his lord, his bright dark eyes would continually turn to that of the Benedictine, and would rest there long when their direction was unobserved, seeming to scan every line and examine every feature, as if there was something still unsatisfied and doubtful upon his mind. Whatever it was that he sought to discover, the impression which the monk made upon him was certainly not unfavourable; for though, as bold as fire, he would have opposed the highest or the greatest of human beings, had he thought their directions prejudicial to his master, he took care to observe, as an oracle, the orders of the Benedictine, and not only to obey them himself, but to see they were obeyed by others.

Care and skill, and unity of purpose, had, as I have said, its

full effect upon Henry Masterton ; and though at the beginning of the second day the surgeon had almost judged his case hopeless, by the end of the third all fear of a fatal termination was removed. During that night he slept soundly and well, and on the following morning he woke with his mind restored to its natural state. The monk had passed the night beside him, and after sitting by him a short time longer, he warned him of the necessity of perfect quiet, and left him, to return for a few hours to his convent.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"I HAVE to thank you for infinite care and infinite kindness," said Henry Masterton, in a faint voice, to the Benedictine, when he returned in the evening. "My boy has been telling me of all you have done for me, and how gently you have borne conduct which, had it not proceeded from an alienated mind, had well deserved far more stern rebuke, and even as it was, might well have exhausted your patience."

"I have learned by sad experience, my son," replied the Benedictine, "that sternness to a woman or a sick man is worse than thrown away. Had I known long ago to bear trifling provocations as a wise man or a good man should, many a bitter pang and many a grievous sin should I have spared myself. And what renders it worse, perhaps, many a fault and many an agony might have been spared to others too. But do not praise me before I have deserved it. To you I have behaved but as a Christian and a man of common sense should behave to his fellow-mortal ; and provocations given in delirium must have a madman to rebuke them. I fear me I have not yet acquired the glorious power of commanding myself under the real excitement of the passions, and God deliver me from the trial ! But how feel you now ?"

"Far better, but still very weak," replied Henry. "But I think that I should soon recover greater strength if I were at any certainty concerning those dear friends of whom I lost all trace at Dinan. Have I dreamed it, or did you not promise me, in my delirium, that you would soon enable me to discover the Lady Margaret and the Lady Emily Langleigh ?"

"I gathered from the wandering words you occasionally spoke, my son," replied the monk, "that you had somehow lost them, of which I was not aware before. Nor do I even know at this moment how it happened that you did not either find them at Dinan, or acquire the means of following, wherever they went."

Henry raised himself on his arm to reply, by telling the events which had awaited him on his return to the place where he had left the Lady Emily, but the monk stopped him ere he began.

"Forbear, my son ! forbear, at present," he said. "You are not yet in a fit state to speak of such subjects. To-morrow, if you be strong enough, we will converse upon them at large."

"Indeed, my good father," replied the young cavalier, "the anxiety I suffer, under the uncertainty of ever finding again those to whom I am attached by every tie of affection, injures me far more than were I to speak for an hour."

"Be at peace on that score, my son," the monk answered. "As yet, it is true, I know not where the persons are whom you seek, because I have made no inquiries ; and it may be even difficult, in the present state of Paris, and of the country round, to gain any immediate communication with them. Nevertheless, believe me when I tell you, the clue to find them is in my hands, and I can never lose it. I will discover, as soon as possible, where they are ; and before you are well enough to seek them yourself, I shall either have obtained all the information you desire, or I will yield the search to you, and enable you to trace it infallibly to its conclusion. With this you must rest satisfied for the present."

"That I can do with pleasure," replied the invalid ; "for in truth it is far more than I expected. I believed that I had dreamed, or that you had merely promised me tidings in order to quiet me in my delirium ; and I feared again to lose the traces of those who are dearest to me on earth. That fear, as you may easily imagine, was enough to make me both wretched and ill ; but it is over now ; and as I am sure of finding them ultimately, I will rest satisfied with that hope, and not exhaust myself with fruitless anxieties. Under these feelings, I can speak of them with perfect tranquillity ; and if you obtain any tidings, I trust you will let me hear them as soon as possible, for, depend upon it, they will be more balmy to my wound than anything the surgeon can apply."

Henry would fain have pursued the subject, but the monk was silent, and even grave ; and for the two following days he not only avoided all conversation upon that particular point, but replied to all the young cavalier's questions, by bidding him rest satisfied that he would keep his word. At the same time there was a kind of gloomy thoughtfulness came over him, whenever the name of Emily Langleigh was mentioned, which seemed to speak no great pleasure in the theme. Nevertheless, whether when alone with Henry Masterton, or when there were others present, he seemed far more calm and self-possessed than he had been when they first met in Brittany. There were few of those fits of abstraction which the young cavalier had formerly

remarked in his behaviour, and none of those wild bursts of passionate feeling which had broken in upon their conversation during their interview at night. He was grave, and even sad; but tranquil and unmoved; and yet, there was still a certain indescribable something in his deportment, which no one could see without feeling that he was a man in whom the exhibition of strong and violent passions had not been restrained, till he had himself suffered bitterly from their lash. All that he said was reasonable, clear, intelligent, though often somewhat too keen and powerful for the subjects on which he spoke. He did not appear to measure ordinary events by the same rules with other men; and in his mind there seemed withal that nicely balanced equilibrium of strong judgment and vehement passion, which might be considered the perfection and height of human character, were it not so finely poised as to be easily deranged. Even when his mind appeared the calmest, even when his conversation was the most free and flowing, there was something in it all that still struck one as unsafe; and the occasional gleam of his eye—the sudden and uncalled for pause—the moment of total absence—and the rapid transition of his thoughts, all gave indications of a state which was not, but which soon might be. Those who have climbed up the side of a slumbering volcano, will know what I mean; for, while they have walked on, amidst calm tranquillity, and verdure, and luxuriant richness, they must have sometimes stumbled over the pumice, or waded through the ashes; and, seeing at every step the traces of fire and destruction, must have doubted the security of the present, from the fearful evidences of the past.

Satisfied, however, that the Benedictine would not have pledged his word to anything that he had not the absolute power of performing, Henry Masterton felt certain of at length tracing out her he loved, and in that certainty daily recovered strength. The monk watched him attentively during several days with the same kind care that he had shown in the height of his illness; but gradually as the vigour of the young cavalier's frame returned, his impatience to hear more of what so immediately concerned him, urged him to press Dom André upon the subject he seemed willing to avoid. The course of conversation is much more easily turned with a sick and feeble man than with one in strong health, and Henry soon contrived to force it on towards the topic next his heart.

It was the first morning that he had been permitted to sit up, and they were speaking of the manner in which he had received his wound. The train of ideas soon led them back to his whole journey, and thence to its cause; and the Benedictine was either less disinclined to hear, or Henry was more determined to speak, for he went on to detail all that had occurred at Dinan, and desirous of leading the monk to say more of Emily, without

wringing any tidings from him by questions, he painted in the liveliest colours the agony of mind he had suffered on losing sight of her at first, and all the anxiety of endeavouring to trace her steps towards Paris.

"And yet," said the monk abruptly, and fixing on him a grave and searching glance,—“and yet this is she who is to be your brother's wife!”

Henry started, and then turned very red and very pale, for in the freedom of communication which had lately established itself between him and the Benedictine, he had forgotten that his own love for Emily, his brother's situation, and all their present circumstances and future purposes were not well known and open. He paused before he replied, for though the monk had displayed towards himself a generous kindness which well merited some return of confidence, yet he felt that however willingly he would have trusted him with the knowledge of his own private history and affairs, yet he had no right to reveal aught respecting his brother, especially when what he had to reveal was anything but honourable to him. Even had he had such a right, he would have shrunk from the exposure of all that he knew; and he remained silent.

“And yet this is she,” repeated the monk more sternly, “who is to be your brother's wife! Young man, you speak of her not as becomes such relationship; and when I know and feel that such is the case—when I see into your bosom as plainly as if there were a window there, am I to be the person to bring you near her again? Speak!”

Henry Masterton, however much embarrassed, was not one to quail before any one, and he replied, “No, my good father, she is not to become my brother's wife. She does not, and has never desired it. He does not, and has never desired it: and the only person who ever did so, is no more—my father. That engagement is therefore at an end. But the promise you have made me unconditionally is not at an end, and cannot be, till it be fulfilled.”

“Were the promise an evil one, my son,” replied the monk, “I would break it as the wind breaks a rush. But first tell me——”

“If, my good father,” interrupted the young cavalier, “if it be your purpose to force me to betray secrets that are not mine, by refusing, except on that condition, to fulfil your own promise—a promise on which my happiness so deeply depends—if such be your purpose, learn that I too can be stern in doing what I think my duty, and that your purpose will fail; for rather than breathe one word that I think myself bound to keep in silence, I would cast away the hope you gave me, and leave the rest to the will of a good God.”

"You are too warm, my son," replied the monk, banishing from his brow a heavy frown that had been gathering thick upon it,—“you are too warm. I have no such unworthy purpose. I seek no confidence but that which is willingly given; and I believe, even though you are yet in the hot and fiery blood of youth, that you would not do so foul a wrong as rob your brother of the love of his promised bride—no, not though your own heart broke in suppressing what it felt.” The monk fixed his keen dark eye steadfastly upon the countenance of his companion, which glowed with a redder hue than it had known for many days. Some men might have mistaken that blush for one of conscious guilt; but the Benedictine was a keen and experienced observer of all those shades of expression which write upon the varying tablet of the face, the history of the heart within; and he judged rightly in attributing that glow to nobler and purer feelings.

“I will keep my promise to the letter,” he added; “but I must ask you one question, and exact from you one promise. Tell me then, does your brother know of your love for Emily Langleigh? Did he know of it before his arrest in Devonshire?”

“I might answer safely, I believe that he does, and that he did,” replied the young cavalier. “But I will in no degree deceive you, father. My love for Emily Langleigh has never been the subject of words between my brother and myself. I feel sure that he saw it—that he knew it, even before we knew it ourselves—but we never spoke of it. It passed all in silence.”

“Then do you think that knowledge influenced him at all in his unwillingness to conclude his own marriage?” demanded the monk, eagerly.

“Doubtless it did,” replied Henry Masterton, and he was going to add, “but there were other reasons also,” when remembering that those words might lead to farther discussion, he merely said, “Doubtless it did! But you declared you would limit your questions to one, good father—I have replied to two.”

The monk made no answer for some time; but fixed his eye upon the floor with that sort of fixed gaze, the very intensity of which betrays that it is perfectly without sight of anything. “Doubtless it did!” repeated the Benedictine, thoughtfully, “doubtless it did!” and he raised his hand to his brow, and paused for a moment, as if to reconcile that answer with facts in the possession of his own mind. “Well!” he added, at length, withdrawing his hand, evidently still unsatisfied, “well! I have, as you say, my son, already exceeded—the promise I exact is this, that you would not attempt, by any means, to discover the young lady of whom you are in search, till I give you information where she is; and on my part, I promise you that I

will give you that information as soon as, by my utmost endeavours, I can ascertain the fact exactly."

"You demand a hard forbearance, good father," replied the young cavalier.

"I exact it but for your own good, on my faith!" answered the monk. "In the first place, you are not yet in a fit state to undertake any such inquiry, my son; and I see that you are already eager to begin it. In the next place, you would, most likely, in the present state of this country, plunge yourself, before a week were over, into some new dangers or difficulties. You have experienced in one day how long incautious haste may delay your progress, and were you to follow your own guidance, you might again fall upon worse obstacles than those you have already met. I once, in time past, did an injury to one of your family—at least," he added, quickly, "I would fain believe that I was misled—that I was deceived—that I was the offender instead of the offended—that the wrong rests upon me, and that, though the remembrance of having done evil be bitter enough, the atonement is in my power to make. I now, therefore, seek to wipe away that memory by doing you a service. Will you give me your promise?"

"I will!" replied Henry Masterton, remembering all the real services the Benedictine had conferred. "I will! but, of course, that promise must have a limit. If within a certain time—say a week—you will give me the information you promise, till the end of that time I will make no effort on my own part."

"At the end of a week—ay, or a fortnight," replied the monk, "you will be still unfit to make any effectual effort for yourself. However, although I think by that time I could obtain the information I desire, yet you must give me three days longer, and say that for ten days from this time, you will not attempt to seek the Lady Emily Langleigh: while I pledge myself, by all I hold most sacred, to use all means of diligence to discover her present abode; and if by the end of that time I have gained no farther information, to give you that which I at present possess, and leave you to make what use of it you will."

"Well, be it so," replied the young cavalier, who was beginning to feel exhausted with so long a conversation. "Be it so—though I should think, good father, it would be much more simple and easy, to tell me all you know now, than to keep me so long in darkness and mystery."

"There may be many reasons," replied the monk, "against my doing so. You yourself have argued, my son, that we have no right to tamper with the secrets of others. I hold the same opinion, and respect your reserve; but I demand, also, that you, on your part, should not press me in regard to mine. Like the many," he continued, turning the conversation, with a very brief

link of connexion, to another subject, as he was frequently in the habit of doing,—“like the many, you mete with one measure to others, and with another to yourself. Oh, how I see that in the world!—how I have seen it in the scenes which I have beheld in Paris this very morning! The parliament, jealous of its privileges, resists the least violation with determined vigour, and cries loudly against the injustice of those who would invade the rights of other orders of the state; yet, at the very time, that same body who are so jealous of their own privileges, are attacking the known and acknowledged prerogative of the crown while exercised by the regent. Oh, self-interest! that ponderous overpowering weight, how it loads the scale of justice, even in the steadiest hand!”

Henry was fatigued; and, willing to listen, but not to reply to anything but that which concerned Emily, he sat in silence while the Benedictine gave him a sketch of the troubled state of the French capital, and explained to him how the arts of the Cardinal de Retz had overthrown the party of the Duke of Elbeuf. “From such scenes of tumult and confusion,” he added, “it is but a slight transition to turn one’s eyes to the military affairs of the city. Yesterday, the post of Charenton was forced by the court troops; and to-day, some bodies of the horse, whom they call the Mazarins, pushed on to the very fauxbourg. They were met, however, by the Marquis of Noirmoutier, with some other gentlemen, and were driven back with disgrace and loss. It is strange enough, too, that at the head of Noirmoutier’s cavaliers was an Englishman whom you know well.”

“Indeed!” replied Henry Masterton; “was it Walter Dixon?”

“As opposite a man as God ever created!” replied the Benedictine; “it was Francis Lord Masterton. Nay, start not up! what I tell you is true, my son.”

It was the first time that Henry had heard his brother named by the title which had so long been borne by his father; there was something in it painful and striking; and he pressed his hands before his eyes till he familiarised his mind with the sound.

“Are you sure it was my brother?” he demanded, at length; “did you see him with your own eyes, good father?”

“I did see him as he returned,” replied the monk, “and I know him as well as I know my own sword—but I forget that I wear none—I know him, I would say, as well as I know you, and certainly it was he whom I saw.”

“Then you have not learned his dwelling, or aught about him, but the mere fact of his being in Paris?” demanded the young cavalier, eagerly.

"Your pardon, my son," replied the monk: "I have known that he was in Paris for several days, and I took care to gather news of him from those with whom he consorts. Do you remember that I once asked you whether he had quitted England alone?" and as he spoke, the Benedictine fixed one of his intense and scrutinising glances upon the countenance of his companion: "That question seemed to be one not palatable to you at the time," he continued; "however, I now know that, whether he left his native land alone, or not, he is here unaccompanied by any one, but three French servants."

Henry replied not for some time, but thought deeply; for he could not reconcile the account given by the monk, with the facts of which he himself was in possession. "I am glad to hear it," he answered, at length; "I am glad to hear it. Have you learned where he lives, father?"

"Not yet," answered the monk; "but one of his comrades in the war—for he has taken the blue scarf with all the enthusiasm of a Frenchman—one of his comrades has promised to furnish me with it in a few days. I hear, too, that he is gay and light, darting from one scene of excitement to another. Now in the midst of the battle or the skirmish, full of action and surrounded by danger—now in the gay saloon, laughing with the emptiest of the Parisian wittlings, or tripping to the squeaking violin with some of the heartless women of the court. Is such his usual and natural character? Are such his habits and his tastes?"

"As different from them, as the snow from the rain," replied Henry Masterton.

"But the snow and the rain are both the same element," replied the monk, with somewhat of a bitter smile; "the rain may be frozen into snow, and the snow may easily melt away in water."

"I have used a wrong expression, my good father," replied the young cavalier; "he is as different from the man you describe, as the night is from the day. He is naturally grave, thoughtful, severe. Brave and active, it is true, but shunning the light and volatile society you mention; scorning the idle and the fantastic amusements of which you speak. A man who would rather pass an hour in solitude with some dull book, or ride a wild horse furiously over hill and plain, than figure in the brightest hall that France or England ever produced."

"Then he seeks to escape from thought," replied the monk, gravely, "or perhaps, my son, to escape from remorse. The dull book will not banish the upbraiding witness of a man's own heart; and care, to a proverb, sits behind the horseman. It must be excitement—constant, never ceasing excitement, till fatigue engenders sleep, and sleep forgetfulness: that is the

resource of a man whose conscience is loud in accusation against him. Look not angry, my son, for whether you know your brother's faults or not, depend upon it that no man ever starts from the calm lover of quiet contemplation, to the gay and giddy follower of pleasure and amusement, without having something that he seeks to forget."

"I do not wish, my good father, to controvert your position," replied the young cavalier, "but what I wish to imply is, that I think there must be some mistake in regard to the person. So different is my brother from the character you describe, that I cannot believe it to be him whom you have seen."

"As surely as that you and I now live," replied the monk, rising from his seat; "but I must leave you, my son. Already I feel that I have spoken with you longer, and on more exciting subjects, than, in your weak state, I should have done."

Henry would fain have protracted the conversation, for feelings were awakened in his bosom, and thoughts were busy in his brain, which required relief. There were a thousand questions he still desired to ask—a thousand doubts he would willingly have tried to solve, but the Benedictine could never be won to words, when the mood was not on him; and rising, without noticing his young companion's wish to speak farther, he left the room.

CHAPTER XXX.

SUCH a conversation protracted to such a length, it may easily be conceived, had no slight effect upon a weakened frame, and an irritable mind. The monk was absent for several hours, but before he returned, Henry Masterton was once more in a high fever, and the good Benedictine was inexpressibly shocked to hear the surgeon declare, that something must have occurred to agitate the invalid greatly during the day, for that he had nearly lost as much in the course of a few hours as he had gained since the first turn of his malady towards health. God knows how it is, that in trouble and in tendance, in care and anxiety, we beget in ourselves a love for that which has pained, even while it interested us. Certain it is, however, that the monk had acquired, during his attendance on Henry Masterton, a feeling of greater affection and tenderness towards him, than perhaps he had ever known before, to the mere object of charitable care. He had learned to grieve at his sufferings, to watch for their relief; and gradually, by fixing upon that one object the hopes and expectations of the moment—like a child planting an acorn, he sowed the seeds of more powerful sym-

pathies, than the utmost stretch of his imagination ever figured at the moment.

When he found that the young cavalier had relapsed into nearly the same state in which his wound had first left him, he felt his anxiety renewed, and not a little heightened, by the consciousness of having contributed to that which had occurred, while, as the reproaches of his own heart were not echoed by any other voice, there was nothing to be abated on the score of pride. All his care, all his attention was renewed, and the object thereof soon began to show signs of amendment. The two great anxieties that weighed upon the mind of Henry Masterton, however, tended very much to retard his recovery. Since his late conversation with the monk, the desire of seeing his brother, and obtaining his renunciation of the hand of Emily, had divided his bosom with the wish to renew his search, and he tormented himself with the thought, that his long illness might prove the means of his losing sight of both. Thus he prolonged the evil by repining at it, but nevertheless, he continued slowly to recover, and day by day regained some portion of the strength he had lost.

While such things were passing in the hotel of Monsieur de Vitray, other events, closely connected with the tale we are telling, were taking place in the same city, and to these we must turn for a moment. It is not, indeed, necessary to notice the particulars of that great political drama, which was acting around, and which but little affect the current of this story; nor indeed should we deviate from the individual history of him whose adventures form the chief matter of this volume, were not the scene we are going to describe, necessary to the full understanding of what is to follow. One brief sketch, also, will express all that we could desire, and it is one entirely of private life.

It was, then, in a large and magnificent saloon, filled with everything that luxury could invent to pamper the most fastidious taste; surrounded with books and instruments of music, soft couches, and splendid hangings, that there sat, one night, about the period to which we have lately referred, one of the most beautiful creatures that ever adorned the earth. The chamber that she occupied, seemed remote from the rest of the house, for no sound was to be heard in it, but a distant peal of gay laughter, as it echoed along the lengthened corridors from some far room of entertainment.

Her dress was rich, but there was more than richness in it; there was that exquisite taste, that perfect knowledge of all that could heighten or display her beauty, which is not always the follower of loveliness; and, although nothing that art could do to improve beauty, was wanting in her apparel, yet the whole

seemed devoid of art, nor was there the least thing added which nature would have been better without.

She sat in solitude, and more than once, when the sound of merriment met her ear, the tears started to her eyes, but they were controlled in a moment, and wiped away with care; and she would strive to amuse the minutes as best she might, now casting her hand over a lute, now letting her eye rest for a few minutes on the pages of a book, now pulling to her a frame of embroidery, and working eagerly a few stitches, as if her life depended on the employment; but taking the book, the lute, and the frame, each in turn, with the gesture of impatience, and laying it down again with a long deep sigh.

At length there was a sound of many voices in the street; the roll of carriages, the clatter of horses, the shouting of torch-bearers, and the steps of a number of persons, were heard passing along some distant chambers. One after another, the guests seemed to depart, the noise in the street ceased, and all was silence, save the echo of a slow, heavy footfall, as it approached the chamber where she sat. Her eye lighted up with joy, and her lips arched into a smile, as those sounds struck her ear; and the next moment the rich tapestry fluttered and swelled with the sudden opening of a door, it was pushed aside, and a cavalier entered whom it were needless to describe. It was Lord Masterton.

The flush of excitement was upon his cheek, and perhaps his eye had borrowed a little of its brightness from the juice of the grape. He was perfectly sober; he was not stimulated even to the least forgetfulness of one pang, or one regret; but he was a little fevered both in mind and body, and he cast himself down by the Lady Eleanor Fleming, with a look of wearied exhaustion. He did it not, however, unkindly, for he let his hand drop upon hers, and clasp naturally round the fair and delicate fingers that met his touch. It was as if he had said, "How heartless! how soul-less! is the commune of the general world. How little is it my place!—My home is here!"

Lady Eleanor received him in silence, though the intense love that looked forth from her deep blue eyes, and the radiant gladness of her lip, told him that he was welcome! how welcome! At length she said, "Have you had a happy evening, my lord?—Your noble friends have stayed late!"

"Happy! Eleanor," he replied, "what is happiness?" The tears swam in her eyes, almost to overflowing, and he added, "I know what joy is, Ellen, and what pleasure is; but I fear me, that happiness is not a fruit of this earth."

"Oh, Frank!" she said, mastering her emotion; "but eight short weeks ago, my society was to be your happiness; my love,

the crowning blessing of your existence! But times have changed, and your feelings too. I cannot blame you."

"My feelings are not changed, dear Ellen," he replied, in a tone of mingled tenderness and impatience: "my feelings are not changed, and the only joy I know in life is thus sitting beside you." Lady Eleanor sighed, and he went on, "You ask, beloved, if I have had a happy evening, and say that my guests stayed late,—my evening was not happy, for you were not with me; and these men not only stayed late, but drank deep."

"Oh, Frank!" said Lady Eleanor, laying her hand upon his arm, and gazing tenderly on his face, "Oh, Frank! if my society constitute your happiness, why not seek it still, as you were wont to do? Why not let us still be all in all to each other? why not let me be with you more?"

"Nay, nay, Eleanor," replied the young nobleman, "is it not your own fault that you are not more with me? Did you not, yourself, when we first set foot in Paris,—did you not voluntarily declare, that you would not mingle with the society it contained? Did you not pray me, to let you wear away the time of our stay in solitude, and insist upon my keeping, as far secret as I could, that you were my companion?"

"I did, Frank! I did!" replied the lady, "I did, because I knew that there were many here of our own country, who might—who must remember me too well—because weakly, after having chosen my part, and made up my mind to the sacrifice, I did not choose to expose myself to the finger of scorn. Perhaps I feared to expose you, too, to danger. But still remember, oh! remember, Frank, that I thought we were to remain here but one short week, and I dreamed, that even then, every moment not consumed by him I loved in absolute business, would be given to cheer my solitude, as I had given every moment of mine to cheer his, in days gone by."

Lord Masterton rose from his seat, and paced the room for a moment with a quick step. He was evidently pained and impatient; and yet, a feeling of deep love and tenderness made him master the irritation which had been aroused by the reproaches he had heard. It cost him an effort, however, to do so; and he remained silent for a moment or two, while he took more than one turn across the floor of the saloon, striving not only to quell all anger, but to recal that gentle, heart-felt kindness, which a reproach—whether just or unjust—never fails to scare away for the time; and which, perhaps, never again makes that heart so completely its home from which it has once been banished. Let not people speak lightly of lovers' quarrel—lovers should never quarrel, if they would love well, and love long.

At length he paused, and turning to Lady Eleanor, he took her hands in his—"Ellen," he said, "we will quit this place as soon as possible; and now, hear what it is that often drives me from your side, into scenes of tumult and danger, or of folly and merriment. Often, often, Ellen, in those moments when I could be happiest, a voice suddenly comes upon my ear, as if it were borne upon the air, and asks me, if I am not accessory to the murder of my father—if it was not I that spilt his blood—if my love, and my love's concealment did not bring about his death? Turn not so pale, Ellen, but speak to me; tell me that it is all a dream, a phantom of my own imagination; repeat to me all those specious arguments that I urge with but a feeble voice to my own heart, in order to prove that I am guiltless of that at least: to prove that, as I would sooner have lost my own life, than seen him lose his, I am innocent of the act that ultimately caused his death; although that act took place with my knowledge and consent; and oh, Ellen, above all, consider how such thoughts may lead a man into any scenes which may drive them even for a time away."

"And do you think, Frank," demanded Lady Eleanor, not replying directly to what he said—not meeting openly the painful subject before her, but turning it aside with that peculiar skill which none but woman possesses, and which woman can ever command, even in the whirlwind of her passion—"Do you think," she demanded, plunging herself, as well as entangling him, in questions where the advantage of complaint was all her own—questions very different from the matter which he had touched upon, and yet so nearly connected with it, that, like the morass and the green moor, it required a very cool and unmoved mind to distinguish the one from the other—"Do you think that I have nothing to forget? Do you never dream that there is a drop of poison mingled, too, with my cup, and that some antidote is as necessary to my peace as to yours? What have I not sacrificed for you, Frank Masterton?—Nay, I say it not because I regret what is past, or that I would undo what is done: for you I sacrificed everything, and willingly, most willingly—honour and virtue, and state and station, and woman's best inheritance, fair fame; but it was that you might be to me, and I to you, the all in all. Oh, Frank! are such things a dream? or are they real? Do they pass away like the thin vapour of the morning? or are they licked up like the early drops of dew, that shine like diamonds for an hour while the day is fresh, and then are dispelled by the very beams that lent them their unreal splendour? Forbid it, Heaven! Frank Masterton; forbid it, Heaven! for did I think it was so, and that all I have done were vain, I might perchance add another crime to the one gone past recall, and die in very bitterness!"

She spoke with the lightning spirit of strong passion flashing from her dewy eyes; and, as she roused and recalled all the agonizing ideas which haunted her in her solitude, and the thought, the bare dream, of ill-requited love came over her brain, a fearful and uncertain gleam, as if the glory of the mind were falling from its sphere, lighted up her features for one brief moment. It passed instantly away, as the flood of woman's tenderness poured out from her heart, and casting herself upon his bosom, she exclaimed, "No, no, no, it cannot be, Frank! I will not believe it! There are many who have loved well and deeply—there are many who have believed that they loved—there are many who have sinned as deeply as we have, and who have changed like the light wind; but there are few, I feel sure that there are few, who have ever loved with the same intense and burning passion that animates our hearts; and those who have so loved, have never changed! Tell me, beloved, shall we not quit this place—shall we not go to some spot, where, amidst the lovely scenes of nature, we may forget the world; and, by the very pain that mingles with every hour of our happiness, perhaps atone the fault that cankers all our peace?"

She spoke with a fervour that was not to be resisted in the state at which Frank Masterton's mind had then arrived. He still loved her deeply, dearly, ardently. Remorse, indeed, preyed upon his mind, and drove him forth to seek, in strife or in gaiety, that forgetfulness which assumes for a time the aspect of mental peace. But even remorse had not yet shaken his love. That time was still in the future, which comes inevitably, fatally, irresistibly as death itself, whenever love has not its support in virtue—the time when custom has worn away the strength of passion, when remorse has sapped the basis of affection, and when the whole fabric, on which we counted as a rock, falls into a mere visionary memory that we can scarce believe to have been real—when the sacrifices that have been made appear great, as the feelings that prompted them become small—when we grow covetous of occasions of offence—when light words are the brands of heavy quarrels; and when, cheating ourselves, we seek cunningly to furnish our hearts with just reasons for loving no longer a person that we have long ceased to love.

To such a state—though it be the invariable end of passion unsupported by esteem, and though often all the torments of jealousy, and doubt, and suspicion founded on past frailty, remain even after love is gone—to such a state Frank Masterton had not yet arrived. He loved Lady Eleanor with undiminished fire: he fancied passion an excuse for vice; he saw but the sacrifices she had made for him, and by the greatness

of those sacrifices he judged the extent of her affection, and depended on its durability. Yet the first step was taken, the voice of remorse was heard, and time only was wanting in the progress of sin towards punishment. Nevertheless, he still felt strongly that his was not the hand which should inflict the slightest wound on a bosom that laid itself open to any blow he chose to strike; and he reproached himself with the selfishness which led him to seek in any other society than hers, amusement and occupation for those thoughts that were too often busy on subjects for regret.

"Yes, beloved," he answered, pressing her to his bosom, "yes, we will quit these busy scenes, and in some lowlier dwelling, amongst the simple cantons of the Swiss, we will try to forget all the world. If memory will intrude, and sorrow for offences that cannot be undone, must haunt us still, we will meet the phantom together, and find strength in the presence of each other. In the cultivation of the earth, in the beauties of nature, in the society of those we love, we shall find employment, enjoyment, and content. We will both bury what we have been in oblivion; and rank, and fortune, and splendid tending, the superfluities of luxury, and the accessories of state, will be but poor sacrifices for peace and happiness!"

"When, Frank, when," exclaimed Lady Eleanor, "when shall we go to realize so dear a dream? Oh! do not hold it out to me without resolving to give it quick effect: I am tired of this place. It is not that I am tired of the solitude in which I live, for to that, in a great degree, I have condemned myself; but I am tired of seeing so seldom him I love. Oh, Frank! if you knew the sunshine that seems to burst upon my lonely chamber when you return, and the darkness that hangs over it when you are away, I am sure you would make it far more the summer-time for me. Nay, frown not, my dear lord—I mean not to reproach you—when shall we go?"

"As soon as I can possibly do so with honour," replied the young cavalier, with somewhat more coldness of manner: "I cannot quit the service in which I am engaged, with propriety, till at least we have recovered those advantages which have lately been the portion of the enemy; in honour I cannot go before."

Lady Eleanor fixed her eyes upon the ground, and sighed. Perhaps she contrasted the present with the past, when honour, duty, loyalty, were all forgot, to remain but an hour by her side. She said nothing, however, for she knew instinctively how vain reproaches are when a woman has played the losing game of yielding all without reserve—when no retreat is left—when she has given herself bound a willing slave into the hands of another—when she cannot rely upon the world,

because she has cast off the world's law—when she cannot repose entirely on herself, because she has thrown from her the strength of her own virtue—when she has nothing to confide in but the mercy of a creature who has already been cruel enough to despoil her of all the rest! She knew, she felt, that every word more of reproach must untwine a fresh tie, and she was silent, convinced, however, by the first opposition of the words honour and propriety to her wishes, that something was already lost, and that she, who was no longer to be the despot, must sink with fortitude down to the slave.

Lord Masterton remarked her silence, and in it was the only reproach he could have borne. His heart was still too much her own to permit of his giving her pain, without some other passion were called forth to counteract his love.

“Nay, nay, Ellen,” he said, as she sat still silent, “do not let us make the moments we are together bitter, when they might be so sweet. I will go, on my honour, as soon as it be possible; and I will not quit you farther than is absolutely necessary, even though those fits of painful reflection, to which I have lately been so subject, should make me gloomy by your side.”

“That promise,” she replied, while her eyes lighted up with renewed hope, “that promise gives me back my happiness! I ask no society but yours—I never seek to see another being than yourself; neither do I ask you always to smile. Surely, surely, one who has wept so often, may well bear to hear a sigh. Let your moments of grief or your moments of happiness be mine—mine alone, and I demand no more. If you be gay, I will be cheerful also; and if you be gloomy, I will strive to dispel your gloom, or, at all events, will divide your care and lighten the burden by taking one half. But still, I doubt not, Frank, that in the pure air and brilliant scenery of the land towards which we are going to turn our steps, all the gloom that hangs over you in this distracted and distracting city, will wear soon away, and that you will remember all your powers of reason. When you do so, I feel sure that you will see, that an accident, which you would have given worlds to prevent, which occurred in a casual affray, brought on by the resistance of the person on whom it fell, cannot be attributable to you, even in the slightest degree. That which a man is most unwilling to commit, and would strive against with his whole strength, can never be considered as his deed; and surely, Frank, you must have forgotten your usual calm philosophy, to accuse yourself of an act of which you are as guiltless as the babe unborn.”

“Sweet sophist!” replied Frank, again casting himself down by her with a smile, though it was but a melancholy one, “Sweet sophist! reason with me always thus, and perhaps I

may learn to think so too. Time," he added, thoughtfully, "Time, too, that blunts all things, may deaden that likewise, and I may forget. Do not think, Ellen," he continued, abruptly, "do not think that I do not seek to quit these scenes as much as you do, dear one; do not think that I am not sick of all these heartless cabals, where men have not even the glorious plea of ambition to excuse their faction, and their bloodshed, and their treason—where all is levity. No, no; I will go willingly enough, and this shall be the plan of our lives: with the wealth that we bear with us we will buy, in some sweet valley of the calm, free Helvetic land, a tract of earth, and I will become a tiller of the ground. We will plant the vine, and sow the corn, and we will send forth our sheep and our cattle to the mountains, and in all the little cares and anxieties of husbandry, we will forget things that are better not remembered. Should they by chance return, I will take my carbine, and over the rocks and precipices will chase the wild goat or the mountain bear. And you, dear one! the bright, the fascinating, the incomparable Lady Eleanor, shall sink down into the *Good Dame* of the chalet, and I shall be worthy Master Masterton, the great farmer of Chamouni! It is a worthy ending for a life begun like ours," he added; and though there was a smile upon his lip as he spoke, there was a touch of that sneering bitterness in it all, which he had ever found so difficult to repress; and it came coldly upon the heart of her to whom he spoke.

The next sentence, too, was as bad, but he soon assumed a gayer tone. "And my good brother Harry," he said, "will marry sweet Emily Langleigh, and be as happy as the day is long. 'Tis a strange turn of fate, dear lady, that the life which we lay out for ourselves now—and for which, God knows, we were as little designed by nature as well could be—that this life we lay out is the very one which would have best suited my brother and that fair girl, who as certainly loves him, and will as certainly become his bride as——" He saw that she was somewhat pained, and added, "as that I love you beyond aught on earth, and that I will never for a moment murmur at my fate, whatever it be, if this dear hand be still clasped in mine. Nay, dear Ellen, think not that I murmur, even now; so far from it, that I will use means to render the steps I am about to take irretrievable. A man may form his mind to any mode of life; but he is wise, when he makes a choice, after full conviction of its being best, to cast away the means of return. My choice is made, my land is chosen; I have passed the stream, and I will break down the bridge behind me. At first we may find things new and strange; our labours may be fatiguing, and our food seem coarse; but before a year and a day be over our

heads, we shall find the task easy, and the fare delicate. Labour will bring repose, and time will cause forgetfulness, but not diminish love."

Lady Eleanor willingly yielded herself to hope, and Lord Masterton, feeling that his absence pained her, for the next three days spent all the time that was not actually employed in the weak wars of the Fronde, by her side. At the end of that time, however, he again began to yield to the necessity of seeking amusement for those dark and gloomy thoughts that pressed upon him, and, plunging deep in the light society of the Hôtel de Longueville, he remained longer absent than before, knowing that he had given pain he did not choose to witness, and fearing reproaches which he could not answer but by anger. He resolved each day, more and more strongly, to disentangle himself from the cause in which he had engaged solely for occupation, and to seek that calm retreat which he had laid out for Lady Eleanor and himself; but he did nothing farther than resolve, and the days passed on without a step towards that object.

In the meantime, deeper gloom than ever fell upon the unhappy woman he left in solitude. The fears of losing that love on which she had staked everything in this life, and, perhaps, beyond it; the reproof of her own heart, and occasionally a gleam of jealous suspicion, parted her lonely hours amongst them. Often she wept the livelong day, and often, often, when all the horrors of remorse, regret, and jealousy, and despair, came thick upon her together, her brain would seem to reel, and she dreamed of deeds of greater madness than that which she had already committed.

At length one day, during which he whom she loved so passionately had never returned, despair seemed to master all, and summoning a servant, she bade him carry a billet to a neighbouring chemist. The man went and returned, bearing a small packet. When she was again alone, she dissolved the powder he had brought in a cup of water, gazed on it calmly for a moment, and was raising it to her lips. At that instant, a step sounded along the corridor; it was one that her ear could not mistake, and she paused, as if uncertain whether to drink or not. As the step came nearer, however, she placed the cup hastily in a cabinet. She had scarcely done so when Lord Masterton entered. He was all tenderness and affection, and, sinking on his bosom, she burst into a passionate flood of tears.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHILE the passions, the errors, and the circumstances of his brother were plunging him more and more rapidly into an abyss over whose edge he had voluntarily taken the first step, Henry Masterton speedily recovered sufficiently to rise from his bed. Day by day he gained strength; but the Benedictine, whose care had been renewed with more assiduity than ever, took good heed never to speak on any of those subjects which might agitate his mind anew. For several hours each day he was absent from the chamber of the young cavalier; but though it did not now want more than three days of the time which he had himself fixed upon as the period at which he was to give his companion news of Emily Langleigh, or to enable him to pursue the search himself, yet he never even distantly alluded to the subject.

It may well be supposed that Henry grew impatient as the time wore on; but he resolved to be silent, and to ask no more questions to which an answer might be refused; but he determined, at the same time, to take advantage of the space which must intervene before his meeting with Emily, in order to remove the only bar which remained against their union.

His brother was in Paris—well known, it appeared, and easily to be found amongst the leaders of the Fronde; and though the Benedictine had given him the most positive assurance that he was alone, Henry too well knew the deep hold that Lady Eleanor Fleming had upon his brother's heart to give credence at once to an assertion which implied that he had torn himself away from her. He hoped that it was so indeed; but the brightest hope has ever in its nature a portion of doubt, and he felt that till the news was given him by his brother's own lips he could not believe it fully. At the same time he did not for a moment imagine—whether Frank had or had not separated himself from the lovely but dangerous woman to whom he had attached himself—that he would hesitate for one moment to free Emily Langleigh from an engagement which, however it might mar her happiness, could never contribute to his. Nor did he doubt, notwithstanding all the painful differences which had taken place between his brother and himself, and all the events which had lately occurred to render their feelings painful towards each other, that Frank, when he heard how deep was the attachment which existed between him and Emily, would feel a pleasure in being able to contribute to their happiness. His brother, he thought, would feel it some sort of atonement for all the sorrow he had occasioned, though

he could not revoke the errors in which that sorrow had arisen.

His determination, therefore, was instantly to seek his brother; but, as he was well aware that both the Benedictine and the surgeon would oppose his braving the cold air of the winter after so long a confinement to his chamber, he resolved to do so privately in some of those hours when he was left alone. His first step was to send forth little Ball-o'-fire, who by this time had acquired a tolerable stock of French of a certain kind, to ascertain his brother's address, by carrying the bills of exchange with which he had furnished himself, to the same house on whom his brother's bills were drawn. He directed the page at the same time to discover, if possible, at his brother's dwelling, at what hour he went forth each day, and when he usually came home. With the perfect certainty of receiving every information that could be obtained by human ingenuity, he waited impatiently for the boy's return, and amused himself during his absence with looking over the contents of the valise which little Ball-o'-fire had rescued from the hands of the Frondeurs, after he had received his wound.

The letter which had been entrusted to him by Ireton for the General St. Maur, was the first thing that met his eye, and recalled to his mind a promise which he had forgot. In Paris he doubted not to be able to hear of the person to whom it was addressed; and, at all events, he was certain of gaining some information at St. Germain's, if, as he believed, the person whom he sought was an officer of rank in the service of the French court. He resolved, therefore, that as soon as he had conferred with his brother, and had discovered the dwelling of Emily Langleigh, he would make the delivery of that letter his next object. When his thoughts on that subject had exhausted themselves, after lingering on it for a time, with the slow and lazy consideration of sickness, his mind somewhat gloomily turned to other matters, on which, however important, he had hitherto bestowed but little thought.

His future prospects rose before him; and when he considered how much of the small wealth he had brought over with him, had been already expended, how hopeless were the means of obtaining anything from England, how little interest he possessed in France, which might be available for the purpose of procuring some honourable employment, his reflections became anything but sweet. It was a dark and painful contemplation, the future. No one perhaps on earth, was ever more gifted with that light buoyancy of spirit, which, on but a narrow foundation, can raise from materials supplied by the good fairy Hope, more splendid fabrics than ever were built with hands. But in the prospect of the coming years, imagin-

ation found nothing with which to furnish hope, for the construction of those airy dwellings, in which the young and light-hearted love to dwell. It was all dim and desolate, and the most favourable point in the future, was its uncertainty. Still it was necessary for Henry Masterton, not only to think of that future, but to fix upon some scheme of proceeding, which might enable him to support himself and Emily Langleigh; and he calculated with miserly accuracy, how long the small sum which he would possess, on the payment of his bills of exchange, would suffice them upon the most careful footing.

It might do so, he found, even for some years, if he fixed his dwelling in a remote province. In the course of years, what might not happen to overthrow the present faction in his native land, and to restore him to his rights and inheritance! In the meantime, where was the hardship, he asked himself, of living on the necessaries, without the superfluities of life, especially when the loss of luxuries and state was far, far more than compensated by the presence and the love of one so dear, so beautiful, so good? With the consciousness of innocence, and virtue, and good designs, would not hope and peace be the constant inmates of their cottage, the most cheerful guests by their fireside? With a memory clear and unstained, and a heart that feared no change, what was poverty to him? As he thus thought, dreams not unlike those which busied the imagination of his brother, began to cross his mind—the calm retreat, the enjoyment of nature, the day of easy labour, and the night of repose. But still, how different was the prospect to him and to Lord Masterton! There were difficulties and dangers to be overcome, beyond all doubt; but yet to Henry, as he suffered his mind to rest calmly upon the coming years, the whole future, taking its tone from the past, became full of sunshine and light, while to the eyes of his elder brother, the sun was for ever covered by a cloud.

While such thoughts as those displayed above, and many others that have passed beyond recal, filled the mind of Henry Masterton, one hour after another slipped away, and the page did not return. At length, however, he came, but accompanied by a grave Parisian trader, who proved to be the person on whom the bills of exchange had been drawn. He excused his intrusion by saying, "That he would not trust such a sum of money with so young a boy," and at the same time placed before Henry himself the amount. The first questions asked by the young cavalier were, of course, for form's sake, concerning the bills of exchange, and the sum they produced; but the next, and more real inquiries, were concerning his brother.

The merchant either knew, or pretended to know, little in regard to him, except that he had drawn to a large amount

upon their house, and that he lived in one of the best hotels in the *Rue des Minimes*.

When asked if he were alone, or accompanied by any of his family, or other persons, he avoided the question; and when pressed, replied, that he believed he was totally alone. The house which he inhabited, the merchant farther said, was divided into two parts; the lower division being inhabited by two other families, while the whole of the upper part of the mansion, including the first floor, had been engaged by the Lord Masterton.

These were all the tidings that he could, or would give, and little Ball-o'-fire remained profoundly silent, till his master suffered the merchant to depart. He then began eagerly to tell his story, but before he had uttered ten words, the Benedictine returned with Monsieur de Vitray, and the boy again held his peace.

"Not at all, father! not at all!" exclaimed Monsieur de Vitray, as he entered the room; "it is a chief and distinguishing quality of the French nation; and, did I not feel the same interest in every man of noble and generous feeling and education, who happens to need assistance, that I should do in my own brother, if I had one—and which, thank God! I have not—I should be unworthy of the name of a Frenchman. France, *mon cher Dom André*, take my word for it, is the garden of liberal hearts, where every person one meets is ready to do you service. Had it been otherwise, how should I have obtained at once from Monsieur de Longueville the government of the Château of Fescamp, for our young friend here, whom he had never seen?"

The monk now explained to the young cavalier, that the Duc de Longueville, governor of Normandy, had been pleased, at the prayer of Monsieur de Vitray, to entrust to him the government of the castle of Fescamp, and the seigneurial lands around it, an office both honourable and lucrative. This, the generous hearted Frenchman had solicited, in order to preserve his young friend from the same distress which had befallen so many of his countrymen during their exile; but, in his own person, he would receive no thanks, willingly transferring the merit of such active generosity to the whole French nation.

One cause of anxiety was now at once struck away from those which had weighed upon the mind of Henry Masterton; and offering sincere though unostentatious thanks to Monsieur de Vitray, he only stipulated that he might be suffered to remain sufficiently long in Paris to conclude the important business which brought him thither.

"Stay as long as you like! stay as long as you like, my dear young friend," replied Monsieur de Vitray; "I must now

leave you, for I have some gentlemen waiting for me below; but stay as long as you like, of course. You have first to get well, and then you have to see Paris, of which you yet know nothing. It would, indeed, take you many years to examine this magnificent city in all its details, and learn all that it contains of beautiful and excellent. There are, nevertheless, three points which I would beg you to remark before you set out to take a survey of the city, and in which Paris is perfectly incomparable. First, it is incomparable in buildings, size, and disposition; secondly, in wealth and opulence; and thirdly, in amusements, gaieties, and delights. It cannot be doubted, in the first place, that Paris is the first city in the world, in point of buildings and disposition; for if one considers its size, which is as large, if not larger, than any city on earth; its buildings, which are the highest, the best arranged, and the most populous in the universe; its streets and its squares, which are so large and so regular; its houses so clean and neat; its churches so magnificent, its hotels so superb, its courts so sumptuous, and its palaces so august; its bridges, its hospitals, its abbeys, and its monasteries so celebrated; one cannot deny that there is nothing equal to it on the earth. Then again, in regard to its wealth; not only the gold and silver which it contains, but the immense quantity of precious merchandize which daily — But I must go, really," he continued, suddenly remembering that some one was waiting for him — "I will finish what I was saying, and enlarge upon the subject another day."

"Pray Heaven he do not keep his word!" said the Benedictine, as the other left the room. "It is singular, is it not? that a man endowed with such fine and noble qualities, and who is himself, what he believes all his countrymen to be, should, in spite of fine sense and delicate feeling, in other respects be so exquisitely tiresome. We all have our madness, that is beyond doubt; and his, though very tedious, is not an unamiable one."

Henry Masterton replied; but the conversation soon dropped on the part of the monk, and was not resumed. Since his last visit, the Benedictine had undergone one of those changes, to which he was so often subject. He had seemed the morning before peculiarly cheerful and lively; but now, all his mirth was gone, and he remained, during the greater part of the day, silent and gloomy. There seemed to be something weighing heavily upon his mind, and after the evening fell, when lights were brought into the chamber of the invalid, and fresh logs of wood were placed upon the blazing brands that already strewed the hearth, he fixed his eyes upon the fire intensely, and sat for some time in the same attitude of gloomy thoughtfulness in which the young cavalier had first seen him at the house of

Monsieur de Vitray in the country. After a time the page was summoned away to supper, and almost immediately upon his departure, the Benedictine said abruptly, without, however, turning his eyes from their gaze upon the blazing embers, "I was remarking this morning, that every one had his madness; now, my own is a strange one."

"And pray, what line may it take?" demanded Henry: "I fear me, a gloomy one."

"Gloomy, indeed!" replied the Benedictine, "but not more gloomy than my fate. However, you shall hear. Yet, as I speak, remember that I know it to be a madness; one of those vain and unreal fancies; those phantasms of the imagination, which gain an undue power over the mind, by being supported by extraordinary combinations of circumstances. Though I cannot divest my mind of the impression, yet it never influences my actions. It is this, then, the madness I speak of. At particular times, a deep and awful gloom seems to come upon me, which I can compare to nothing but a heavy thunder-cloud rolling over the sun, in the midst of a summer's day. It hides and darkens everything. I view everything on earth in an evil aspect, and woe to the man that opposes me at that time! But this is not all. My imagination has become impressed with the idea that this cloud is always the forerunner, the harbinger, the prophetic shadow of some coming fate; and, as if to confirm me in the belief, circumstances have so fallen out, as always to follow by something extraordinary those fits of preternatural gloom. Sometimes they are longer, sometimes more intense, than at others; and, by their duration, I have, in a degree, learned to judge, whether the circumstances that are to follow will be of the darkest, or the lightest shade of misfortune; for always the deeper evil, the more profound sorrow, follows the lengthened and heavy fit of sadness. In some degree, too, I fancy I can divine the nature of the coming events; and though not always, I have found myself very often right. The night you arrived at the château of Monsieur de Vitray, some weeks ago," he continued, "a slight and almost momentary cloud passed over my mind; and I told my good old friend, that something was going to take place."

"I hope that my coming," said Henry, with a smile, "has not proved a misfortune to you, my good father. Certainly, the acquaintance then made has been of deep benefit to me; and unless you consider the loss of your valuable time, and the exercise of your kind benevolence, as great misfortunes, I do not see any that it has brought on you."

"None as yet, my son, certainly," replied the monk. "But still your coming was an extraordinary event; and, as I tell you, the fit was but slight, and for a moment. Very different

is what I have felt all this day. A deep, solemn, awful shadow has been upon me, together with a conviction that my days are drawing towards a close. I have tried to shake it off—to banish it by reason, by occupation, by prayer; but in vain! A still, solemn, sad, and persevering voice, seems ever repeating in my ear the word Death! I do not fear death! I should look upon it rather as a blessing! Why, therefore, if this be simply one of the horrors of the imagination, why not haunt me with something I do fear? Yet still it echoes Death! Death! and I cannot but think that if death does soon overtake me, it will be accompanied by something more terrible than death alone. It will be fearful in the manner, or the accessories—I know not what to expect; but nothing would take me by surprise. If I were assailed this very night, as I returned towards my convent, by the hands of men destined to take my life, it would be no surprise.”

“If such be your feelings, father,” replied Henry, “why not remain and pass the night here, as you have done till within these last two days?”

“No, no,” replied the monk, “I am expected at the convent; and, besides, I have business to transact to-morrow morning which will keep me away from you for the greater part of the day.—No, I must go to-night.”

“Then, at least, take with you two or three of the servants of Monsieur de Vitray,” said the young cavalier; “that can do no harm, and may do good.”

“What good can it do, my son?” demanded the Benedictine. “If what I feel be the mere work of imagination, nothing can spring from it—it must end in nothing; and if it be the whispering voice of Fate, think you that all I can do will change the immutable purpose?—No, no, no!”

“I cannot believe that a warning would be given,” replied Henry Masterton, “without some object; and I can see none, if we have not the power of avoiding that which we are warned against.”

“May we not be warned to prepare ourselves for it?” asked the monk. “It is in vain, my son. Years, and months, and days of consideration have I given to this subject, and my mind is made up in regard to it. At first, I deemed as you do, and I took wonderful pains to avoid whatever I expected was to follow, when often, very often, the very methods I employed to avoid impending fate, brought it upon my head; and of all the many bitter calamities that have befallen me—calamities the shadow of which invariably seemed to fall upon my mind beforehand—not one has there been which the most careful wisdom could have avoided. It is in vain, believe me—it is in vain, that we fly from the slow hounds of Fate. They follow

upon our track with unvarying certainty, double and turn however we will. It matters not—perchance it may not be to-day, nor to-morrow, nor this week, nor the next, but come it will, and come when it may, and how it may, I am prepared for it.”

“And yet, my good father,” replied Henry Masterton, “you set out by saying that you knew it all to be but a dream of the imagination. Let me beseech you to banish such thoughts, or if there be any real danger which menaces you, take measures against it.”

“I said that I knew it to be but a dream of imagination,” replied the monk, “for as such alone is it cognisable to the calm eye of Reason. If I pause and think over it, such is the only conclusion I can form, and that it is but a vision of the fancy, supported by strange coincidences; but still are there not things of whose existence we are certain, yet which are not tangible to human reason?—Are there not many such? I ask you. Nobody that owns a God, or whose mind is not of that foul and grovelling kind which limits all its notions to the low earth which is its present dwelling-place, can doubt that there are; and, amidst all the wild, dim mysteries of our obscure being, may there not be some communication between the spirit imprisoned in this clay, and beings that we see not in the air around us?”

To Henry Masterton, the feelings of the monk—notwithstanding his own nature being highly imaginative—seemed little less than madness; and, indeed, he had been led to think, from many casual circumstances in his commune with the Benedictine, that the constant struggle between strong passions and high moral principles, had, on some few points, disordered an intellect of the first order. It seemed as if, in the combat between reason and passion, reason had, indeed, conquered, but had received a wound which rendered the victory insecure. He ceased, therefore, to combat by argument, ideas which rejected the same mode of examination that other opinions admitted, and gradually turned the subject into another channel, hoping that a few days, or perhaps hours, might remove the fit of gloom that had fallen upon his companion.

The Benedictine, however, did not seem pleased with the change of subject from that on which his mind was now painfully fixed, and, after a few words of common conversation, he rose and left the invalid for the night, telling him that it would be late the following day before he could return. With this information the young cavalier was not displeased, as it was his fixed determination to visit his brother the next morning, though still but feeble from his long sickness; and in this design he did not wish to encounter opposition.

His page returned almost as the Benedictine left him, and

immediately recommenced the tale which had before been interrupted. Some words, it appeared, which the boy had heard pass between the monk and several gentlemen in the court, had given him a suspicion that the Benedictine himself knew more of the young Lord Masterton than he acknowledged; and he had during the morning dogged his steps to a house in the Rue des Minimes, which proved to be exactly opposite to that in which the young English nobleman had fixed his abode. The boy, with all the dexterous shrewdness which he had acquired amongst scenes of danger and difficulty, crept instantly under an archway hard by, and waited for some time, till he saw his master's brother issue forth on horseback, followed by several armed servants. When he had ridden on, a porter still appeared standing at the gate of the hotel, and, in a few minutes after, the Benedictine came forth, crossed over the street, and walking leisurely forward, as if pursuing his way, passed the man at the door, gave him his *benedicite*, and spoke with him a few words, as if casually. The porter replied, and the monk passed on, as if satisfied, while the boy, issuing from the archway where he watched, proceeded to ask his way to the merchant's on whom his master's bills were drawn.

Henry smiled at his page's narrative; but in the conduct of the monk he saw nothing but the tortuous and cunning method which the children of the Romish church pursued to obtain the information of which they were so covetous. "The straightforward way," he thought, "would have been to have called at my brother's door, and letting him know that I was in the same town with himself, to have demanded tidings of his health and his concerns, on my account; but that would not suit the Jesuit, and he must gain all the news he intended to tell me of my brother, by this crooked and circuitous means."

Such were the thoughts that passed through the mind of the young cavalier; but the page, in whom suspicion had grown habitual by mingling amongst men, and amongst events where candour and frankness were continually encountered by cunning and deceit, could not but believe that the monk had some private motives of his own for the conduct he pursued. Indeed, to him, the Benedictine had always been an object of curious suspicion and unsatisfactory contemplation. He had seen him before, he felt sure; but, notwithstanding his extraordinary powers of recollecting those whom he had once beheld, he could not recal precisely where he had met him, or under what character; and long and eagerly did he often watch the countenance of the monk, catching occasional glances, which seemed to lead memory to the very brink of certainty, when suddenly they would pass away, and leave all as dim and obscure as at first.

He loved him not, perhaps, from the very angry disappointment that he felt at the first instance of his shrewd remembrance ever failing him; but still there was a sort of commanding dignity in the monk's demeanour, which taught the boy to obey, during his master's sickness, in spite of undefined doubts and positive dislike.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE morning was as cold and unfavourable as well could be conceived, for an invalid first to venture forth; and as Henry Masterton quitted the house of Monsieur de Vitray, to seek the dwelling of his brother, a cold shudder passed over his whole frame. The sky was covered with clouds, the wind was easterly; round all the principal shops and booths the canvas screens and blinds were drawn close to exclude the dust and the cold air, and nothing looked brisk or cheerful in the whole city but the charcoal fires of those who sold roasted chestnuts at the corner of the streets.

A great city in a cold day is a melancholy sight in itself; and, although the heart of the young cavalier was one not easily depressed, yet there was a sufficient portion of uncertainty—that most cheerless of all things—in his own situation, to render him not a little sad as he walked onward through the town. Memory, also, was painful to him, when he remembered the scenes in which he himself, and the brother he was about to seek, had last met; when he compared the past with the present, and thought of the ruin of his house and the dispersion of his family. Corporeal weakness, too, oppressed him; and he felt, for the first time in his life, what a load the body can be to the mind, how it can weaken its energies, crush its enjoyments, and depress its hopes.

The task which he was going to fulfil had many painful points also. Much must inevitably pass between his brother and himself that would be bitter enough to both; and, though he had determined to abstain, as far as possible, both from retrospections and explanations, he felt that, both in his own bosom and that of Lord Masterton, there would be a silent voice which would speak all the sorrowful things that their lips refused to utter.

We take the resolution of doing a particular thing, and we view it, as we think, under every aspect; we consider all the points and bearings of the undertaking, and we satisfy ourselves of the easiness of the task; but as we approach towards the

moment of execution, how many unforeseen difficulties, unexpected obstacles, and new points of view rise up before the magic wand of reflection. Thus, as the young cavalier proceeded on his way, a crowd of considerations rose to his mind which had not before suggested themselves. Was he about to meet Lady Eleanor Fleming, he asked himself, and if so, what must be his conduct? If his brother asked where Emily Langleigh was, and under whose protection, what could he reply? and if he demanded what authority he had from her to seek the dissolution of their engagement, what had he to produce?

He had marked upon a plan of Paris before he set out, the route he was to follow, in aid of the memory of his little page, on whose shoulder he leaned; but, as these thoughts thronged thick and fast upon his mind, he turned into a street detached from the line he was pursuing, in order to think over his conduct beforehand. By the time he had walked on to the end, however, he had determined upon doing—what, perhaps, is the best policy on all occasions, where a man's guide is honour, and his support integrity—namely, to let his conduct take birth in the circumstances as they arose; and he turned to proceed on his way.

Setting out fully two hours before the time at which little Ball-o'-fire had seen his brother leave home the day before, he doubted not that he should reach his house before he had quitted his dwelling. He remarked, however, that there was an extraordinary silence and emptiness in the streets, and, on inquiring of an artisan, he found that an attack had been made in the morning on the Fauxbourg St. Germain, and that every one attached to the party of the Fronde had been summoned, in the king's name, to repulse the king's forces.

Knowing that his brother had cast himself into that party, he hesitated for a moment, in regard to whether he should proceed; but at length, as he had already risked the cold air after his confinement, he resolved to go on, and ascertain, at all events, whether he were gone forth or not. A few minutes now brought him to the *Rue des Minimes*, at the far end of which he caught a glance of a small body of cavalry, galloping at full speed out on the other side towards the Place Royale. The house in which his brother dwelt was then pointed out to him by the boy. It was situated on the opposite side of the street, and seemed a large but ancient hotel, with a *porte-cochère*, and a court within itself, and over the gateway appeared, carved in stone, the armorial bearing of some noble family, who, probably, were either by that time lost altogether in the stream of time, or, like the blazonry that proclaimed what they had been, were mouldering fast to decay.

Without pausing to trouble himself with any farther reflection

tions, Henry Masterman crossed over the street, and tried to push open the gates, which offered no means of making his desire to enter heard by those within. The wooden valves, however, were fastened on the other side, and resisted his efforts, so that he was obliged to have recourse to the hilt of his sword, with which he struck several loud blows, and then waited for an answer, but waited in vain. Again and again he repeated the summons, till the vacant street echoed with the sound ; but nobody seemed likely to attend to the call, when an old man, crossing from the other side of the way, asked why he did not go round to the back entrance, which, he said, was most generally used.

The young cavalier informed himself where it was, and was about to proceed thither, when he heard some one begin slowly to unbar the gate, and a female servant appeared, demanding what he wanted.

"I have knocked till I am tired, my good woman," he replied, "and want to see Lord Masterton. Is he at home?"

"I know nothing about him," replied the woman, sulkily ; "I belong to Madame de Valbrun de Milaret, who has the lower story, and I know nothing about the English milor, except that his porter, whose business it is to open the gate, is always out of the way when he should be in it, and, if I were to come when everybody knocks, I should have nothing to do but to do his work for him—an idle, strolling vagabond!"

"But cannot you inquire for me," said Henry, "whether Lord Masterton is at home? If he be, say that it is his brother who wants to see him."

"I cannot go away and leave our own place without any one," replied the woman, in a tone rendered somewhat more civil by hearing the rank of the person with whom she spoke ; "but, if you be his brother, sir, you had better just walk on across the court, and in at the large door in the corps de logis, you will most likely find some one of his idle lackeys at the top of the great staircase. They heard you knocking, I warrant, but did not choose to come. However, if you do not see any of them, you can but walk on into the saloon, and, if you be his brother, of course you will be welcome; many a one takes greater liberties who is no brother at all."

Henry thanked her for her advice, and proceeded to follow it by crossing the court towards a large door, which entered from a flight of stone steps in the main body of the building. This door was not absolutely open, but it was not absolutely shut, and the young cavalier easily effected his entrance into a large paved vestibule, lighted by four windows, ornamented by rich worked cornices, and displaying, on the stained and blistered walls, and in the broken arabesques of the architecture, a thou-

sand traces of pomp and splendour falling to rapid decay. A large leathern chair stood by the side of the fireplace; but the chair was vacant, and the dull white embers, with here and there a red spot, showing that all was not quite extinct, evinced that no careful hand had been employed in supplying fuel for some time.

At either end of the vestibule appeared a broad flight of steps, leading to the chambers above, and Henry was in some doubt which he should choose; but the stone steps of one being covered with some matting, that indication of man's care seemed to imply that there was the more frequented side of the house, and he accordingly began to mount the steps slowly, fatigued and faint with the unwonted exertion of so long a walk. When he was about half-way up, he heard a distant door bang to, and while the sound echoed emptily through the whole building, he paused to listen for any footfalls that might follow, but all was silent, and concluding that it was the wind which had closed some open door, he proceeded.

At the top of the staircase was another smaller vestibule, with several doors around it; and here again he paused, puzzled which he should take. The anteroom in which he stood bore evidence of far more attention than any part of the house he had hitherto seen. It was tapestried all round, and, besides several embroidered seats, and a richly carved cabinet of oak, one or two fine pictures, of a small size, were fixed against the walls.

Had the young cavalier felt certain that his brother was alone in Paris, as he had been told, he would have experienced no difficulty, but would have entered the first door he found; but there was in his bosom an obstinate conviction that the unhappy connexion into which Lord Masterton had fallen could not be broken off already, which made him hesitate; for whatever liberty he would have taken with Frank, he would not for much, have burst rudely and unannounced into the presence of Lady Eleanor Fleming. The mingled feeling of condemnation and pity which he experienced towards her, the pain which he knew she must feel on seeing him, made him even more scrupulous—perhaps it might be said, more tender in regard to wounding her by any appearance of disrespect, than he would have been in his conduct towards a more virtuous woman; and he hesitated long, before he laid his hand upon the lock. At length choosing that which, from some of the slight marks that strike the eye but escape description, he judged to be the room of public reception, he opened the door, and entered a large and splendid saloon, furnished in the same taste as the antechamber, with old but rich hangings, pictures, and embroidery. Two tables of marble stood at either extremity of the room; and the chairs

ranged regularly round the walls, the fireless state of the hearth, and the open windows, told that, though it was perhaps occasionally used in moments of importance, it was not habitually tenanted by the dwellers in the mansion. Various objects of a very different character, however, were spread out upon the tables, and finding no one there, Henry approached the one next to him, and proceeded to examine the things that were strewn upon it, in search of the implements for writing. The first thing that met his eyes was the sword which his brother had worn on the morning appointed for his marriage; and beside it lay a bloody glove, a token of the scenes of strife in which he had lately mingled. A thousand other things, well remembered, lay about, marking a number of incidents in the past, and calling up in the midst of a tumultuous city, the calm, sweet scenes of his native country and his early years, dreams of happiness that were past, and moments of simplicity that could never return. The young cavalier let his eye rest upon them, one after another, and the days gone by returned. It is alone when we stand on a lofty station, and in looking back upon the past, behold the whole track we have traversed far below us—when we see obstacles overcome, and stumbling-blocks removed, and gulfs past, and the height climbed, that we can find pure joy in contemplating minutely the space over which we have travelled in the journey of life. But Henry Masterton stood a poor exile in a foreign land, with a noble father lying in a bloody grave, and a brother, whose fine qualities might have dignified the highest station, debased by a connexion that was worse than death; his native land prohibited to his footsteps, and his true inheritance devoured by strangers. With such a present and a doubtful future, however sweet might be the scenes of the past, there was to his eyes a shadow over them all—however delightful the moments he recalled might have been in their passage, the retrospect of yesterday was painful, from the bitter contrast of to-day. The irrepressible tears sprang in his eyes as he raised a ring, cut from a precious stone that had been found on the shores of the sea by which he was born, and which as he remembered well, had given rise to many a search along the beach for others like it, in the weariless and hopeful days of infancy; and drawing towards him an ink-glass and a portfolio of paper, he sat down to write to his brother such a letter as his heart might dictate under such reflections.

“Go out, my boy,” he said, addressing the page, who had followed him; “go out by that door, and see if you can discover some one in the house who can give me tidings of my brother. He must surely have left somebody behind him, and you can enter where I should feel afraid to intrude.”

The boy obeyed with speed, for there was nothing on earth

he hated more than standing still ; and during his master's recovery, he had been fatigued to death with three weeks of inactivity. No sooner was he gone, than Henry heard door after door open and shut through the house with extraordinary rapidity, and he began almost to regret, as he remembered little Ball-o'-fire's reckless boldness, that he had sent him upon an errand which he had not chosen to execute himself. The thought troubled him, and he had some difficulty in commencing his letter ; but as he went on, the light, gay step of the page, running heedlessly here and there through many an empty room and corridor, embarrassed him more, and he laid down the pen to listen. At length the sound ceased, and he proceeded ; but it was with difficulty that he satisfied himself. Now he thought his letter cold and restrained, and he would not have had it so for worlds ; and then he deemed what he had written, not too kind, but too humble in its tone, and feeling that in demanding the relinquishment of Emily's hand, he sought a right and not a concession, he tore the paper, and was about to begin another, when suddenly the tapestry on the side of the room opposite the windows began to move. " Here is some one at length," he thought ; but the moment after, the hangings were turned back from a door behind, and he again saw his page apparently returning from his search.

" Well, what news?" demanded the young cavalier. " Have you found no one?"

" There is no one in this wing," answered the boy ; " but I hear somebody moving at the end of the long corridor that leads behind the state-rooms to the opposite wing."

Whether it was that he stood in the shadow, or that he was really alarmed at something—unusual as it was for him to be alarmed at anything—Henry thought that he perceived an uncommon paleness on his countenance.

" What is the matter?" he asked : " why did you not go and see who it was you heard?"

" Because," replied the boy, " I heard a low wailing, as if there was a woman dying there, or in deadly pain. I have seen many a man die, and hope I shall see many more, but I never saw but one woman die ; and it was a sight I did not love. Hark !" he added ; " I hear it even here. Do not you?"

Henry rose, and advanced to the door where the boy stood ; but his ears were not so practised in catching every sound as those of the page, and he heard nothing.

" Come forward hither," said the lad, as he saw that his master had not yet caught the wailing that he mentioned ; " come forward hither to the end of this passage, and you will soon hear."

Henry followed immediately to a door, which opened from

the large half-furnished eating-room, which flanked the saloon, out into a long dim passage beyond; and as he did so, heard more and more distinctly, a low murmuring sound, between a groan and a cry, which rose occasionally over the voice of some one else speaking with quick and noisy utterance.

The young cavalier paused not a moment, but advanced along the corridor as quickly as possible. At every step it became more and more clear, that the chambers to which he was proceeding were occupied by some one in excessive anguish; and it was evident that both the voices he heard were those of women. At length he caught distinct words, spoken in English. "For God's sake, take a little, madam—the doctor will be here directly—Jacques is gone to see for my lord—but if you would but take a little—Oh dear! oh dear! what shall I do?—she is dying, that she is—Pray, my lady, take some of the essence—surely there's a step—it's the apothecary, surely!" And, at the same moment as Henry approached the door from which the sound issued, it was thrown wide open.

He entered without hesitation; but the sight that he saw when he did so, made him pause almost upon the threshold. The room in which he found himself was the same elegant saloon described in a former chapter, and filled with all the various implements of female occupation or amusement. The chamber, however, he scarcely beheld, for it was on the form of the fair and faulty Lady Eleanor Fleming that all his attention became instantly fixed. She was apparently in the agonies of death; and in her still lovely countenance there was that dreadful and prophetic collapsing of the features which seldom, if ever, fails to announce the tomb. Her long dark silky hair, freed from comb and pin, hung nearly to her feet, and fell in part dishevelled on her bosom, as, in the writhing agonies under which she seemed to have suffered, she had slipped from the couch on which she had been lying, and now lay half prostrate on the ground, and half supported against the side of the ottoman. Her head was bent partly forward on her bosom, by the edge of the couch against which she leaned, and upon which her left arm still remained, with the fingers convulsively grasping the cushions, while the right, which had fallen to the ground, held fast in its hand the remains of a drinking cup, which had been broken as her fingers had struck against the floor. The beautiful and speaking eyes, that, in former days, seemed full of the fire of empire and command, were now closed; but the long, long black lashes, by which they were fringed, lay arched in profuse loveliness upon her marble cheek, from which every shade of the rose had vanished. The soft chiselling of her mouth, too, remained unaltered, but the lips were deadly pale; and, half

open, showed the pearly teeth within firm set, as if to stay the deadly groans that broke from her agonized bosom.

Those groans were becoming less frequent as Henry Masterton entered, but still they—as well as a fearful shudder which occasionally shook her whole frame—told that she yet lived, though it was evident that the soul was hovering at the portals of another world. By her side was a female attendant, whom Henry well remembered to have seen at Penford-bourne; and who now held a crucifix and a bottle of essence alternately to her lady's lips. Having returned to her mistress the moment she opened the door of the chamber, without remarking to whom it was she gave entrance, she addressed the young cavalier as a physician, and begged, in French, his instant assistance, for that her lady had taken poison.

"Nay, nay! I trust in Heaven you are mistaken," exclaimed Henry, in English. "What makes you think she has committed such a fearful act?"

The woman started up, with a half-uttered scream, as she heard his voice.

"Gracious Heaven!" she exclaimed, "is it you, sir? You have come at a terrible moment, but for God's sake render my poor lady some aid, for she is dying. She has lived here alone, and shut out from all the world, till she has become full of dismal fancies, and having parted with my lord about an hour ago, in some unkindness, I fear she has taken poison. Do you not see the cup still in her hand?"

Henry, though but little skilled in leech-craft, eagerly afforded every assistance he could. He raised the unhappy lady from the floor to the couch, and he bathed her temples with essences from her toilet; he sprinkled cold water on her face, and did all that kindness, devoid of skill, could do to restore her. His efforts had some effect, and she was beginning already to show signs of returning consciousness, when the apothecary, who had been sent for, entered the room.

His first proceeding was to examine some drops that still remained in the broken cup; and as he did so, he shook his head with melancholy meaning.

"How long has it been taken?" he demanded.

"I cannot tell to a minute," replied the woman, in miserable French, "but nearly an hour, I dare say."

"Then it is quite useless to do anything," said the man of medicines, laying down again the fair, beautiful hand he had raised to feel the pulse.—"There is no antidote on earth could save her now."

"But, at least, make the effort!" exclaimed Henry. "Do not let her die without aid. She was already reviving when you entered the room."

"Doubtless! doubtless!" replied the apothecary. "She may yet live some hours. She has only fainted from excess of agony, and the longer she remains insensible, perhaps the better; for what were the use of recalling her again to consciousness, when that consciousness implies torture?"

"We are taught to hope," answered Henry, "that repentance, however tardy, if it be sincere, may find pardon in heaven. Give her then, in God's name, the means of repentance, and let her not pass away to another world without an interval between a passionate act of sin and her irrevocable doom. Besides, sir, the lady is a Roman Catholic, and——"

"The priests must have their dues," interrupted the apothecary, with a sneer—"Well, well, sir, we will soon restore her to consciousness, though I doubt whether she will thank us for it. Perhaps, indeed," he added, "internal mortification may have already begun, and then the pain will, of course, be less."

He now applied himself with skill and perseverance to recal Lady Eleanor to recollection, and gradually succeeded in doing so. A few deep-drawn sighs and convulsive sobs were the first symptoms of returning sensation, and in a moment after, the cup, which she had still continued to hold with a close grasp, fell from her hand, and was dashed to pieces on the floor.

"Oh, how I wish I had broken you to pieces long ago!" cried the woman, addressing the cup.—"I have seen it standing in that cabinet, sir," she continued, speaking to Henry, "for three or four days; and I do not know why my heart misgave me; but I had a great mind, more than once, to throw away what was in it, and put fair water in its stead; and now that it is too late, I wish to Heaven I had done it."

"Here! cease your babbling, my good woman, and attend to your mistress," said the apothecary: "she is coming to herself. Pour these drops into her mouth."

Almost as he spoke, Lady Eleanor opened her eyes; but they were heavy still, and full of death, nor did she seem for some moments sensible to what was passing round her. "Is it all over?" she muttered to herself; "is it all over?" But in less than a minute, she began to look faintly round, first turning her eyes upon her faithful attendant, and then upon the apothecary, and seeming at each glance to become more and more conscious of her situation. At length her look fell upon Henry Masterton, as he stood near her feet, and she gazed fixedly upon him for a moment or two, as if she did not recollect him; but the next instant, she raised herself upon her arm, to see him better, the whole blood, which seemed previously to have been gathered to her heart, rushed at once into her face, and covering her eyes with her hands, she sank back upon her couch.

Henry was embarrassed and distressed; but his was not a

mind to remember one angry feeling towards a dying woman, and after pausing for an instant, considering what to do, he did as his heart directed, and approaching close to the fair, unhappy being before him, he said in a low voice, "I hope you are better, lady! I hope you do not suffer, as you seemed to do but now!"

Lady Eleanor replied nothing, and turned away her head; but it was painful shame, not anger, appeared to move her, and even as she did so, she let her hand fall gently upon his, as if in reply to the kind words he spoke.

"Nay, nay, dear lady, be composed," said Henry; "it is a friend who speaks to you; one who wishes, and has always wished you well."

"Oh, Master Harry," she replied, in a faint, changed voice, as if it came from the dead,—“I do believe you always did wish me well, and had your will been followed, I should not have now blushed to see you—I should not have been lying the despised and miserable creature that I am—I should not—O God! I should not have been hastening, even now, to another and an awful world, by my own rash act.”

"But do you not feel yourself better, lady?" he asked, anxiously. "May we not hope that there was not enough of the poison to——"

"Hope nothing, Harry Masterton; hope nothing," she replied; "but that it may soon be over. I am dying—the great agony, indeed, is past; but I feel death upon me—in every fibre—in every limb.—And yet, I would rather it was so," she added, turning wildly round towards him—"I would rather pass that dreadful porch, whose passage admits of no return—were it even now in my power to change. I would rather still hurry on, than hear him speak such cold and chilling words again."

"Hear whom speak such words?" demanded Henry, judging from the wildness of her eyes that her mind began in a degree to wander.

"Him, him!" she replied. "Hear him, who does not even come to soothe my dying bed! O God! O God! not from him did I deserve this!" And she burst into a terrible fit of tears.

"O think of other things, lady," said Henry. "You say that you are dying, Lady Eleanor. If it be so—and who shall say it is not?—think of what it is to die, and while there is yet time, open for yourself the path of hope. You have cast from you the world; cast from you, too, all that is sinful in it; and strive by deep repentance for the whole, to win pardon yet."

"Hope!" she exclaimed. "What have I to hope? Have I not, for his love, cast from me all hope in this world? Have I not, from his unkindness, cast from me all hope in another?"

Gracious God !" she added, clasping her hands, as the thoughts of the dying came over her mind—"Gracious God ! whither am I going ? What am I to become ? O that I could see for one moment beyond ! And will thine ear be closed against those who fly unbidden to thy presence ? Has thy mercy no store for those who leave the station in which thou hast placed them ? Is there no hope for those that die presumptuously ?"

"There is hope for all that repent, lady," replied Henry. "Yes, yes, indeed, believe it ! It is promised in the book of truth. It is promised in the word of God himself. Let me, lady, let me seek for you some one of your own creed, who can aid you in this dreadful moment. I am no priest ; and all I know is, that redemption is promised to all who believe and repent. Let me seek some one who is fitted by knowledge and profession, to lead you to repentance and salvation."

"Do, do !" she replied ; "do so, quickly, for I feel that the time is but short. Oh, Harry Masterton, you would have stayed me from evil, if I had listened to your voice, and now you give me hope in the misery which that evil has brought upon me. My blessing were a sinful one, but God will bless you, whatever becomes of me."

"Who is your lady's confessor ?" demanded Henry, quickly turning to the attendant, "and where does he live ?"

"Alas ! sir," replied the woman, who stood by in tears, "she has seen none for several months."

"Well, I will soon find one," replied the young cavalier, advancing towards the door.

"Go to the convent at the corner of the opposite street," said the apothecary. "The good Capuchins will soon send you a priest from amongst them, for the small sum of a silver crown ; which, by the way, is just my fee for coming here this morning." And he rose also to depart.

Henry glanced at him from head to foot, with an eye of bitter contempt, for that callous insensibility which men are too apt to acquire by constant familiarity with pain and death, and throwing him the sordid piece of money that he claimed, he left the room to seek, as speedily as possible, for a priest.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

As Henry Masterton left the chamber of Lady Eleanor Fleming, he beheld standing half-way up the long corridor into which it opened, the figure of his page, little Ball-o'-fire, and then for the first time perceived that, notwithstanding the dreadful scenes

of death and misery in which the boy had been in fact born and brought up, his aversion to see suffering in a woman was so great, that he had hung back instead of following close on his footsteps, as he was wont to do.

"Is the lady dead?" he asked, coming close to his master, "for I do not hear her groans any more."

"No, no, she is not dead," replied the young cavalier. "But which is the way out, my boy? I am in haste."

"Then the shortest way is down this back staircase," answered the page; "I have found out a door at the bottom of it which leads into a street, behind that by which we came in."

Henry followed instantly, and in a few minutes was in the *Rue du Foin*. He paused for a moment ere he shut the door behind him, to mark the house well, and then turned to seek the convent the apothecary had mentioned, and which he concluded to be the nearest place where he could procure any person qualified to receive the confession of the dying woman, and administer to her the consolations of religion. At the far end of the street, however, as he entered it from the house, he saw two men on foot, one of whom was attached to the church. This was evident by the different form of his dress from that of the common habit of the day, though at the distance of the street the young cavalier could not distinguish whether he was one of the regular parochial clergy, or merely a member of some religious order. His own bodily weakness, and his late indisposition were entirely forgotten in the painful interest he felt in the scene he had just left, and speeding forward against the cold wind, he endeavoured to overtake the priest and his companion, who were walking slowly on in deep conversation.

Henry easily gained upon them, but as he did so, he saw that the subject on which they spoke affected them deeply, for, though they displayed none of those quick and eager gesticulations with which the French in general give point and application to their lightest words, the speakers would suddenly stand still and gaze upon each other's faces for a moment, and then move on again, sometimes the one laying his hand slowly and firmly upon the arm of the other; and sometimes drawing back, each from his neighbour, as if their commune was not of the most amicable kind. As he came nearer, too, he saw by the black robe and cowl, that the one nearest to the wall was a monk, while the fashion of the other's dress, the principal article of which was a buff coat slashed with silk and trimmed with lace, induced him to set him down for an Englishman. Neither was the figure totally unknown to him, and for a moment he asked himself, could it be his brother? and yet surely, he thought, his brother would bear about him some deeper signs of mourning for his father's death.

He paused not on his way, however; and as he came nearer still, the fancy that it could be his brother vanished, for the stranger was a less powerful man in every respect than Frank Masterton, and the page immediately gave his suspicion its right direction, by springing to his side and whispering the two words, "Walter Dixon!" The Parliamentarian was deep in conversation with the monk, and it was evident that he was trying to convince him of some truth by deep and solemn asseveration. He held his arm, he laid his hand upon his heart, he raised his look to heaven, while the monk walked on with his arm raised and bent as if he were grasping his brow with his hand in deep thought. His hood was over his head, so that Henry could not catch any mark whereby to recognise him, but turning suddenly at the very end of the street, when the young cavalier was within a few yards of them, he exposed to his view the features of the Benedictine Dom André. His hand was pressed upon his forehead, his ear was bent, listening to the words which the other eagerly poured into it; and while he did so, his teeth were fixed in his nether lip, as if in the effort to master some deep emotions within. He walked on straight towards the young cavalier, without seeming to see anything before him.

Not so Walter Dixon, however, whose eye roved about continually, in spite of the eagerness with which he was speaking; and immediately that he and his companion turned, his glance fell upon Henry Masterton. "Here is his brother!" he exclaimed, instantly: "I must leave you." And at the same moment, he sprang across the street, passed round the opposite corner, and was out of sight.

The Benedictine stood as one confounded when he beheld Henry Masterton: but it seemed to originate as much in the sudden mingling of a different current of thought, arising in his unexpected appearance, with the ideas which had been flowing in the monk's mind previously, as in the surprise at seeing him abroad, when he had left him confined to a sick chamber at home.

"You here!" he exclaimed; "you here, at a moment like this! Good God; what do you here?"

"I will explain all that hereafter, my good father," replied the young cavalier, rapidly: "at present I must claim your immediate aid as a minister of religion, for an unfortunate fellow-creature lying at the point of death, who demands to confess her sins, and receive such comfort as nothing but religion can bestow."

"I am unfit, my son, I am unfit," replied the monk, wildly; "I, across whose brain but now thoughts were flashing like the devouring lightning over the black void of night!—thoughts that

I dread to recal!—I, go and prate of consolation to another! But send to the Cordeliers, or to Notre Dame—send—send to——”

“It cannot be, good father,” replied Henry Masterton: “recollect, for Heaven’s sake, your character, your profession, your Christian charity. The lady for whom I call you has taken poison!—her soul is oppressed with sin and fear—the gates of the tomb are open before her. Ere I can find another priest, perhaps the hour may be past, and the eternal seal set upon a life of transgression! Can you, will you refuse?”

“No, no, my son!” replied the monk: “one moment let me pause—let me think—let me become myself, for I have heard those things this day that have shaken my inmost soul.—Now, now,” he added, after an instant’s thought, “now lead on, I will follow.”

Henry now led the way with a step of light, and the monk followed, muttering to himself, “‘Thou shalt not shed blood;’—‘if they smite thee on one cheek, smite not again, but turn thou the other, that they may smite thee on that also:’—‘do good to those that despitefully use thee.’ Ha!” he continued, as Henry stopped at the door of his brother’s dwelling, “ha! dost thou bring me here? Who told thee this?—who led thee hither?”

“Father, there is no time for question and reply,” answered the young cavalier; “death will tarry for no appeal, and the summons of death was strong upon the lady when I left her: enter, then, in Heaven’s name! and I beseech thee do thy best to save a soul in the present dreadful hour!”

“And is it even so? O God! O God! that it should be thus!” exclaimed the monk: “But I will, I will, my son; and now, Heaven aid me!” So saying, he drew the hood still farther over his head, and entered the door, which was opened by the only servant Henry had yet seen.

“Has your lord returned?” demanded the young cavalier, as he passed in after the monk; “and how is the lady now?”

The woman shook her head. “She seems sinking fast, sir,” she replied; “nor has my lord returned, though both the men that he left are gone to seek him.”

“I will wait for him, then, in the great saloon,” said Henry. “Conduct the holy father to your lady, and let me know when he comes forth.”

Henry turned along the corridor, with his page, to the great saloon in which he had first paused, and there, striding up and down the apartment, he waited the long, long minutes of painful suspense—suspense not in regard to the event, but in regard to when that event was to happen.

The monk followed the attendant straight forward till she

opened the door of the saloon in which the unhappy lady lay. There he paused for a moment, leaning his hand against the lintel of the door, and looking anxiously forward. What passed on his countenance could not be seen under the shadow of his cowl, but his footsteps wavered as he advanced; and after he had sat down by the side of the couch on which she was placed, he said nothing for several minutes. Lady Eleanor lay motionless: her arm was cast across her eyes—the paleness of death was on her lips and cheeks, and it was only by the rise and fall of her bosom, and occasionally a low murmur of distress, that it could be distinguished she yet lived. The monk's eyes seemed fixed upon her, and, after a long pause, he said, "Be comforted, my daughter. Woman, leave the room," he added, turning to the attendant, who immediately obeyed. "And now," he continued, still speaking in French, "have you nothing to say? Do you not seek to relieve your heart of the heavy load which lies upon that of every human being, and weighs it down in the moment of the spirit's departure?"

"I do, I do indeed," said Lady Eleanor, faintly withdrawing her arm from before her eyes, and letting it fall heavily by her side; "but, oh! good father, is there, is there mercy in heaven for sins such as mine?"

"When they are confessed and repented, there is mercy for all," replied the Benedictine: "speak, then, while there is yet time."

"I am faint," she said, "give me that cup, father; it yielded me strength but now."

The monk gave her some of a restorative which the apothecary had left, and when she had moistened her lips, she continued—

"I must be short in my tale, for my time, I find, is to be short. I am an Englishwoman, father: my mother died early, and I was left to the charge of a parent who considered little else but his own interests, and my education was entrusted to others, who taught me well those idle graces and weak accomplishments which might win admiration from creatures like myself, but few of those principles which might secure my own esteem and keep me in the way of heaven. They did worse—they taught me to believe those graces and accomplishments the only things of value on the earth. Was not that a deadly sin, father?"

"The sins of the dead are on their own head, my daughter," replied the monk: "speak of yourself; we have all enough to answer for ourselves."

"Too true," rejoined the dying woman. "Well did I profit by those lessons, and I learned to admire myself as the most beautiful thing on earth. That was my first great sin; but still I thought that there was something more to be adorned than the

person ; and while my father spent his years at the court, I strove to enrich my mind with everything that was *brilliant* or *fine* in the writings of the past or the present. That which was *good*, perhaps, I cast away. My father's fortunes were soon made, and to our own inheritance he added the estates of the Lord Langleigh, who was, I fear me, basely betrayed. His ambition was then satisfied, and his avarice narrowing itself to simple accumulation, he left the court, and, residing at Penford-bourne, gave himself up to the increasing of his wealth. I was now of an age to wed, and though we saw few persons in our own dwelling who might aspire to match with me, yet in our visits round we met many such, and I soon learned the pleasure of being loved and admired ; but my heart seemed of ice itself, and I felt that, though I would have given my hand to any one my father pointed out, all were to me as indifferent as strangers. Not that I did not seek to make them love me : I lived upon their adoration ; and if there had been one man in all the county, whom I knew, and who dared to pay attention to another when I was present, I would have exhausted all the artifices of human vanity but I would have brought him to my feet. And, oh ! how I scorned them when I saw them there, those proud lords of the creation !—how I laughed to see the agonies of their passion, and how little did I know how deeply I might feel it myself. All this, I know, was sinful ; but there was worse to come. The only being who was much admitted to our dwelling was a young man about six years older than myself—a nephew of my father—my own cousin, but a demon of cunning, and pride, and revenge. He was constantly there, always by my side, flattering my vanity, feeding my pride, rendering me small services, and whispering sweet words——”

“And you loved him !” exclaimed the Benedictine, sharply ; “and you loved him !”

“No, no, no, father !” replied the lady, seeming to acquire energy and strength for the denial ; “no, I despised him : however, he was always there, and he won my father's ear. His own mean parents were enriching themselves by petty means, and pretended to greater wealth than they really had. If I wedded my equal in rank and fortune, my father knew that he would have had to dower his daughter with a splendid portion, while Walter Dixon offered to receive me portionless. That argument was sufficient, and my father promised him my hand. I cared not, and was all obedience, doubting not that, for his own sake, my future husband would leave me to pursue my own path after our marriage as much as I had done before. He left the house, to communicate the tidings to his parents, and, scarcely was he gone a day, when two strangers arrived, bearing letters to my father. They were both elegant and handsome

men, though much older than myself, and of course I took care to strive for both their hearts. The one, however, I soon found, had been a soldier, but was now a priest, a Jesuit, called Du Tillet; the other was an English gentleman of splendid fortune and high accomplishments, by name Sir Andrew Fleming. He had travelled long, distinguished himself, vacillated between many a profession—the robe, the gown, and the sword, but at length yielded all to passion, and before he had been five days at Penford-bourne, he offered his hand to the daughter of his host."

The monk sat deeply silent while she spoke, and even his hands he had drawn within his robe, as if what was passing in his mind might have been read by the working of the muscles. The lady, however, now paused, and from weakness, fatigue, and mental pain, a dreadful fit of convulsive sobbing seized her, which had nearly terminated her existence. The monk called no one to his assistance, but raised her up and held the cup to her lips while she strove to drink. At first she could not swallow the liquid that it contained, but at length she succeeded, the sobbing gradually ceased, and after a few moments of silence she went on. "It is fleeting fast, father, it is fleeting fast, and he does not come to me, for whom I have sacrificed all virtue, and peace, and hope, and life."

"Who, who?" demanded the monk; "for whom have you done all this?"

"For the only one I ever loved," she replied. "But you shall hear—I will be quick—I must be quick. My father told Sir Andrew Fleming of the tie that bound me to another; but in the eagerness of passion, and with the sinful reasoning of Du Tillet, the knight overcame my parent's scruples."—The monk groaned.—"He had penetrated the secret of my father's avarice, and not only offered to wed me without a dowry, but offered gold himself. No written promise had been given to the other.—Walter Dixon was a Calvinist, and Du Tillet persuaded my father that it would be sinful in a good Catholic to give his daughter to the son of an heretical church. My father consented; I was passive in his hands, or rather glad to be freed from my engagement to a man I despised, though it was to wed one to whom I was indifferent. All was easily arranged, and before Walter Dixon returned, I was the wife of Sir Andrew Fleming. Messengers were despatched to warn the disappointed lover, and a hint was added that his presence was not desired. My husband was all ardour and tenderness: he was a man of deep and fearful passions; and I was cold to him as the grave. I loved him not, and I let him feel that I did not love. A deep gloom came over him, and the disappointment of fond expectation, of reciprocal passion, seemed almost to affect his brain.

How much more was it so, then, when he saw me surrounded with other men, and saw the smiles in which I could deck myself for other eyes! Passion and reproach followed, and coldness and pride was the only reply. When I found that he dared to blame and to complain, where all flattered and caressed, I went from evil to evil, and where I had coquetted for sport, I now coquetted for anger. Thus the days went on in pain and displeasure to both; and bitterly, I believe, did he repent the having persuaded my father to break his word to another. At length Walter Dixon made his appearance, and the whole house prepared to look black and cold upon his coming, and to repel his reproaches with scorn. But reproaches he made none, and though Sir Andrew Fleming still frowned, my father felt relieved, and I—oh yes! I smiled basely and cruelly upon him!"

"Did you do no more than smile?" demanded the monk. "Speak! for truth must now be told, and it were vain—it were worse than vain to try to hide the amount of the sin you have committed. Remember, if you betrayed your faith to your husband, in thought, word, or deed, so much the more was——"

"I did not," replied Lady Eleanor, raising herself a little on her arm; "I did not even for a moment, in thought, word, or deed."

"Then he has told the truth," muttered the monk to himself, while Lady Eleanor continued—

"Never, never! though my husband with mad jealousy suspected both him and me. He well deserved suspicion, for he left no art untried; but I despised him as he merited, and only smiled on him in public to revenge suspicions that I did not deserve, and harshness which, perhaps, I did.—Clasp not your hands and groan, good father—I know that it was sinful, and often and bitterly have I repented that I did so. But my evil angel tempted me, and at length when that low, despicable wretch was wounded by my husband's hand, in a moment of mad passion, I tended him as if he had been the dearest of beings to my heart—I sat by his bedside—I spoke words of comfort to him, I spoke kindly and affectionately of him—but not because I loved him. Oh, no! but solely to punish the other. I urged it farther than that dark-spirited man, Fleming, could bear. He reproached—he accused me—I treated him with contempt, and did all that woman could to increase his suspicion and his wrath. Madness—for to do him but justice, he was incapable of so acting without madness—madness took possession of his mind, and in the midst of my calm, cold taunts he drew his dagger, and would have stabbed me, had not that very woman who was but now in the room, hung upon his arm till her screams brought aid. He was dragged away, and I declared that I would never see his face again. He yielded much more

readily than I had expected; and I own that I was piqued that he did so, though at the same time he exacted a promise from myself and my father that Walter Dixon should not be again admitted to our dwelling: a promise that we both gave without a regret. When he, my husband, was gone, I was happier than ever for a time; but not long after, he wrote me a letter, which by some means found its way to my heart. He told me that he still passionately loved me, and that he had alone consented to quit me, because he doubted his own powers of commanding his passions under the treatment that I had shown him. He drew a picture, too, of what domestic life might be, that made me pause and reflect. Not that I learned to love him; but I learned to regret more deeply that I was his wife; and for the first time I began to picture to myself what happiness might spring from mutual love. A change came over me; I did not cease to encourage admiration when it came near, but I ceased to seek it—I began to think that there must be something more than mere admiration to make one happy, and I began to dream dreams of love and affection, from which my ill-fated marriage were to cut me off for ever. But I must be speedy—that deadly faintness is coming back upon me—my feet and my hands are cold like marble.—My father died, and though the mistress of a splendid fortune, I sought not in the town the gaze and admiration I should once have coveted; I remained in the country, I loved solitude, my time passed quietly, and I was beginning to feel the repose of virtue, when one day a note was put into my hand in the writing of Walter Dixon. It merely told me that two young cavaliers, the sons of the Lord Masterton, were halting for a day in the village. It had no name subscribed, but I well knew the hand, for Walter Dixon had, indeed—whether he thought it would move me or not—had, indeed, saved our estates from spoliation in the civil war, or at least claimed the merit of it in a letter which he wrote me. Well, I asked the young cavaliers to my house, and oh! my father, how shall I explain the feelings with which the elder filled my heart! It is in vain! I have no time—” she added, quickly,—“something seems to weigh down my bosom, and choke my breath.—Be it enough, then, that when I left him, and thought of the man to whom I was bound for life—what fearful feelings came across my bosom! Sir Andrew Fleming! I thought. My husband! Was it possible? I thought over all that had passed—I thought of him as a lover—as a husband; I called up his look, his conduct, his harshness, his jealousy, his anger,—and, O God! O God! how I did hate that man.”

“Woman! woman!” exclaimed the monk, rising up from his seat, and casting back the cowl from his head—“O God! O God! how he did love you!”

Lady Eleanor's eyes fixed full upon his face, as the struggling sunbeam of a December day found its way through the high window and fell clear upon his brow. There was agony and terror in her glance, and for a moment she gazed on him in silence. At length, with fearful strength in one so evidently dying, she too rose from her recumbent position, and clasping her hands as if in the act of prayer, while her eyes still remained fixed immovably on his face, she sank down upon her knees at his feet.—A film seemed to come across her eyes—a low murmur, that was scarce a groan, broke from her lips.—She fell forward on the ground—and the spirit departed for ever from its clay.

The monk grasped his forehead with his hand, and gazed on her for a moment with a look full of mingled feelings—love, and anger, and sorrow, and despair—then raising the body in his arms, he placed it on the couch where she had been lying, smoothed the discomposed limbs, closed the eyes that seemed still turned imploringly towards him, and three times printed a long kiss upon the pale lips of the dead. Then turned hastily away, thrust his right hand into his robe, and exclaiming, “Now! now!” he rushed out of the apartment.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HENRY MASTERTON paced alone, the length of his brother's hall; and every two or three minutes he turned and listened—but nothing sounded as if the confession had reached its close, or as if he, for whom he waited, had arrived. It was all silent, and with feelings far more deeply pained than cold reason justified, both for the unhappy woman who had hurried her own fate, and for him who was to return and find his happiness, however unholy, blasted. Henry traversed and re-traversed the saloon which he had first entered. He then paused, and raising the various articles that were strewed on the table, endeavoured, notwithstanding the pain he had before suffered in the contemplation, to turn his mind from the anxious dread of the present, to the memories of the past. But now every object connected itself with the scene that was passing so near him. He lifted the glove he had before remarked, but in the back there was a deep cut, and he found it broadly spotted with blood. A large chalice, wrought in some foreign workshop, stood beside it, and on examining the mounting, he found that it was supported by skulls, neatly imitated in silver, while, on the stalk, some trembling wit had insulted the humanity he partook and the fate he dreaded, by a scurvy jest, for the sake of

seeming bold in the eyes of insects like himself. Many other objects of curiosity, or elegance, lay near; but when the mind is full of any one subject, where can the matter be found, between which and the engrossing topic, some associations will not be discovered?

Weary, woful, anxious, the young cavalier cast himself on a chair, and gave himself up to thought, which poured upon his brain like a troubled and a swelling sea running over the sands of the shore, with a thousand waves flowing indistinctly one into the other. Who was this Benedictine, he asked himself, whose interest in all that concerned him was so great? What was between him and Walter Dixon? Why was he seen in companionship with him, when he knew him to be a villain? What could be his personal concern in the affairs of his brother?

While he asked himself these questions, he almost regretted that he had called the Benedictine to the death-bed of Lady Eleanor Fleming; but then again he had ever remarked that there was a dignity and nobility of feeling in the monk, which, as it broke forth in minute traits and accidental circumstances, could hardly be affected, and which would guard against his making an evil use of anything he might learn. Besides, there was a seal of confession—a seal which, in the annals of the world, had never been known to be violated—that secured his silence, and the oblivion of all that might be entrusted to his ear.

The mind of the young cavalier next turned to the feelings of his brother; and he calculated, with pain to himself, all the agony that Frank would feel, if, as he had divined from some casual words of Lady Eleanor, any unkindness on his part had prompted the fatal act to which she had had recourse. To lead a woman's love into sin—to teach her to violate her plighted faith—to rob her of state and station, virtue and good name, and then to let her feel for one moment how she had fallen—to dispel the bright dream, and leave nothing but the fearful truth—to make her feel the ingratitude of him whom she had loved and trusted—to repay all her sacrifices even by an unkind word!—It was what Henry could scarcely conceive; and yet there was something which whispered that in his brother's case it might be so. Frank's sneer had been, from his boyhood, as untameable as the tiger. It had spared none, it was easily excited; and how dreadful must be the sneer from one, for whose love she had crushed the future, to one, whose future was all crushed!

As he thus thought, a sound struck his ear as of a closing door, and forgetting that he had been before deceived, he looked round for his page, to send him out, in order to see who it was. He then first perceived that the boy was absent, and rising, he

proceeded to the end of the corridor, in which, to his surprise, he found him.

"What, eaves-dropping, sir!" he exclaimed, catching him by the shoulder; "I thought you had been better trained and nurtured. Do you not know that disgrace and shame attend the spy, even to his death?"

"I spy on no one but an enemy," replied the boy, boldly, but colouring deeply at the same time; "and to discover a spy, it is but fair to listen to his words. Now I hold, that a man who comes hither in a different shape from his true one; who conceals his name and station, and who winds himself into your thought, while he hides from you his own—I hold that man to be a spy indeed.—But, hark! there are horses in the courtyard, and there is a foot in the vestibule."

As he spoke, the sounds caught the ear of his master also, though amidst the clattering of several horses' hoofs on the stones of the paved court, he could not distinguish, at first, the tread of a foot in the vestibule below. In a moment after, however, the staircase echoed to the step of some one coming fast; and a few words, spoken rapidly between two persons without, followed.

"No, no, sir! come in!" cried the voice of Lord Masterton, as the door opened. "You have put the lion on the track, and you shall see him run down the quarry, or feel his fangs yourself.—Shut the doors there below; and see that no one passes out!" And instantly after having given this order, he entered the saloon.

He was evidently heated and excited, and his dress, which showed no warlike preparations for the civil contentions in which he had been wielding his sword, bore, nevertheless, evident traces of a deep and desperate struggle. His hat was cut through—his face was blackened with smoke and gunpowder, and his gloves were stained with blood. His eye instantly fell upon Henry as he entered; and he paused suddenly in his advance, with marks of unfeigned astonishment.

"Harry!" he exclaimed, "you here!—This is unexpected," and he turned to the person who followed him—no other than Major-General Walter Dixon, asking him, with a curling lip, "Think you, sir, my brother does me the favour to lead the wolf to my sheepfold? But we shall soon see more."

"Speak with me a moment, Frank!" exclaimed Henry, seeing him advancing at once to the opposite door, without taking farther notice of him. "For God's sake, do not go in there, in your present state of mind! What is the matter, Frank?"

"What is the matter, Henry Masterton!" replied his brother.

"Tell me, is Sir Andrew Fleming in my house, or is he not? He once forgot his priestship to draw steel upon me; and if I find him, I shall not remember his sanctity now."

"You will find no one there, Frank," answered Henry, "but a monk and a dying woman. You know not what has occurred, and indeed you are unfit to meet the scene before you. Pause for a moment, Frank, and hear me!"

"A dying woman!" exclaimed Lord Masterton—"a dying woman! What do you mean?—Who is dying?" and as he spoke, he turned deadly pale with the forebodings which rushed across his mind.—Henry paused, embarrassed how to tell the sad tidings he had to communicate—"What is it? Speak, Harry!" continued Lord Masterton. "Your looks are not enough—Is it—is it Ellen?"

"It is, indeed, Frank," replied Henry.

"Then that villain has been here and killed her!" exclaimed the young nobleman. "Let me go, Henry Masterton—I must, I will go to her."

As he spoke, the opposite door opened.—Within two yards of it stood Lord Masterton; Henry's hand was still upon his arm; and about a couple of paces behind, Walter Dixon had stopped without speaking, while the above conversation took place between the two brothers.—The door was flung violently open, the tapestry was pushed aside, and the Benedictine strode into the room with madness and fury in his whole aspect. He paused a single instant, when he found himself so suddenly in the presence of several other persons; but his eyes the moment after fixed upon Lord Masterton with an expression of deadly, concentrated hatred; and, in an instant, before any one could make a movement, he withdrew his right hand from his bosom, clasped tight round something that glittered as he raised it in the air, and struck the young nobleman a blow so quick, and seemingly so slight, that one could scarce conceive it would have shaken a child.

Lord Masterton stretched forth his hands, as if to grasp his assailant by the throat—but his eyes rolled unmeaningly in his head, and reeling a moment where he stood, he fell back into the arms of his brother, deluging him with blood.

"Villain!" cried Walter Dixon, "atrocious villain!" and drawing his sword with the rapidity of lightning, he at once passed it through the body of the murderer. The monk strove to strike him with the dagger he still grasped, but his blow fell wide, and the Parliamentary again plunged his sword into his bosom. Without a word, or a cry, or a groan, Sir Andrew Fleming—for he indeed it was—fell dead upon the floor. Both the first and the second wound he had received were of a mortal kind, and he was dead before his head struck the

ground. Not a movement, not a shudder, not a convulsive gasp intervened; but there he lay—now a living man, and now a corpse.

Not so Lord Masterton. The dagger had struck him between the first and second rib, and had divided some large blood-vessel in its passage; but he yet lived; and while the gore poured forth from his bosom with fearful rapidity, he pressed his brother's hand—as Henry endeavoured to stanch the blood—but forcibly resisted the attempt. By this time the room was full of servants, who had returned with their lord from the struggle which had taken place that morning between the Fronde and the troops of the court on the little plain of St. Michel, and who had followed him towards the saloon, after closing the doors according to his order. Two of them had arrived in time to behold the fall of the Benedictine, and all ran forward to aid their lord, but he refused any assistance, and pointing forward to the door, pronounced with painful struggles the word "Eleanor." One of the men instantly ran to fulfil what he conceived to be his master's desire, and to call the unhappy lady to his side; but he returned in a moment after, still paler than he went, followed by the attendant who had witnessed her mistress's agonies, and had by this time learned her death.

"Gracious God!" she cried, clasping her hands as she gazed upon the prostrate form of Lord Masterton, who lay with his head supported on his brother's arm as Henry knelt beside him. "Gracious God! and he dying too! I told my lady what would come of it when she took the first step."

"Your mistress! your mistress!" ejaculated Lord Masterton, struggling with the suffocating blood that seemed to pour into his chest and choke his utterance. "Your mistress, Bertha!"

"Alas, my lord! I have no lady now!" replied the woman.

Lord Masterton closed his eyes, raised his hand, and let it fall again upon the ground. His eyes opened, his under jaw dropped, and Henry Masterton was alone—the last of his race!

There was a momentary pause as the young cavalier gazed close and intently upon his brother's face, and all the rest hung over him in painful and fearful expectation, not knowing whether the last breath had parted for ever from the lips of the young English noble, or not. But no light came back into the glassy eyes; not another breath heaved the heavy bosom of the dead; and Henry Masterton gently laid down the head of his brother, and rose up as from some horrible dream.

The servants who stood around him were all French, and knew him not; but from some instinctive perception, that his interest in the dying man was greater than that of any other

person present, they had remained passive round him while he upheld the body of his brother in his arms. Now, however, they began to ask each other who he was, and one more shrewd and careful than the rest, left the room hastily to seek the criminal lieutenant of the city, for the purpose of taking cognizance of all that had occurred.

To the other servants, the attendant who had followed Lady Eleanor from England, soon explained that the young gentleman they saw was the brother of their dead lord, and prompt obedience to his commands, and ready proffers of service were the consequences.

Walter Dixon, in the meantime, while these events were rapidly passing near, had coolly wiped his sword in his glove, and returned it to its sheath. He then approached the body of the Benedictine, who had fallen forward on his face; and after gazing on it for a moment as it lay, he turned it over with his foot, even while the yet unstiffened limbs hung languidly back in the position they had assumed, with the flaccid relaxation of late death. When he had succeeded in rolling over the body, without touching it with his hands, he looked steadfastly on the countenance of the dead man, as if studying carefully the lineaments of that cold, meaningless face.

"Thou art changed," he said at length, addressing the corpse. "Thou art changed, but still the same. I did not think it would be my hand which should do it. But it is right as it is."

He then turned towards the young cavalier, who was still standing by the side of his dead brother.

"Henry Lord Masterton," he said, "I congratulate you on your accession to your family honours. May you enjoy them more wisely than those that are gone!"

He spoke calmly and seriously; but Henry felt as if the very word congratulation were an insult at such a moment.

"I thank you not for your congratulations, sir," he replied, "because standing with so many causes of grief around me, I have little subject for congratulation in my fate. But I thank you, General Dixon, for having avenged my brother with such ready zeal, although—if the idea which has but now crossed my mind be true, and this dead man be Sir Andrew Fleming—perhaps your sword was the servant of your own interest, as well as of my indignation."

"You do me more, and less than justice, young gentleman," replied the other. "I acted from impulse, and therefore, not on the *wise principle* of consulting my own interest, as I should call it, or the *base one* as you might term it. It is fortunate, however, and rare to find so foolish an act, as the yielding to impulse, rewarded by the removal of an obstacle in our path.

However, *Milor*, as these knaves will soon learn to call you, let me advise you to make haste, and secure all that your brother has left of valuable in this country, otherwise his most Christian Majesty will come in with his *droit d'aubaine*, and sweep away all, as clean as a dog licks a greasy plate."

Henry turned away in disgust. "I understand, sir," he answered, as he walked towards the inner chamber, "that one of the servants has gone to summon the criminal lieutenant, for whose arrival we must all, of course, wait. I seek to be alone at present, therefore I leave you; but we may have to speak more hereafter, ere we part."

Thus saying, he turned and left the room, while Walter Dixon, with a sneer, observed that he had grown both solemn and proud on his new lordship. It may easily be conceived, however, that the infinity of new thoughts and feelings which rushed upon the mind of Henry Masterton demanded some pause of solitary reflection. All the painful scenes through which he had passed that day floated confused before his eyes like the memory of a frightful dream, and he could scarcely believe that they were real. When, however, he had paused for a time upon the mere facts, he began naturally to seek the causes of what had taken place, and as he did so, he was led strongly to suspect that Walter Dixon was no mean mover in the whole. Might he not, whose interest it was to remove Sir Andrew Fleming from his path—might he not be the person to tell him that his faithless wife was then in Paris with her paramour? Might he not lead him to the very dwelling near which he had met the monk that morning? and might he not then, as he had seen him do, bring back the passionate and fearless lover, to dispute the unhappy woman with her fierce and frenzied husband? The event, perhaps, had not been exactly such as he expected; but in such an affray as was certain to take place under those circumstances, the calm and calculating villain had probably felt sure of finding means to work out the purposes of self-interest. Such, at least, had been the result; and on comparing his past history with the present circumstances, Henry found that all the objects for which Walter Dixon had been striving through life were attained by the events of that morning. He had avenged himself with his own hand on him who had crossed him in love and in ambition, and he had removed the only obstacle to his possession of those estates which he had so long coveted.

Other considerations then followed, and the more Henry Masterton found himself alone in the world by the death of the last member of his family, the more his heart turned yearning towards her who alone had the power to replace them all. But where was he to find her? The dead murderer of his brother

was the last who could give him any clue to her place of dwelling. With him the secret of her removal and the knowledge of her abode had died, and the last link of the chain was broken. It might be years, he thought, long years before he found her; and, that fancy, added to all that he had suffered and undergone that day—the first which he had stirred abroad since his long and painful illness—totally overcame him, and casting himself on a seat before the table, he buried his face in his arms, and gave up his mind to every painful anticipation.

He had not sat long, when little Ball-o'-fire ran in to announce the arrival of an officer called the *Quaternier* with his commissaries and a body of archers, the criminal lieutenant not having been found. An immediate inquiry began to take place into the events of the morning, and the officer of police commenced his operations by putting every person present under the surveillance of his archers, sagely remarking, that as three persons were, he found, killed, somebody must have killed them. The English refugees, he also remarked, were always filling Paris with their squabbles, and it was high time that the law should take severe notice of their irregularities. After these preliminary observations, he proceeded to view the bodies as they lay, taking a written note of their exact state, and then to examine the persons present.

Henry, as brother of the dead nobleman, was the first he thought fit to interrogate; and as the first also, his examination was protracted to a fatiguing length, having to explain who all the parties were. When his evidence was gone through, that of Walter Dixon and the servants was taken; and it became very plain—the Quaternier declared—that the Benedictine monk, formerly the husband of the lady who had poisoned herself, had in a fit of wrath and jealousy stabbed her seducer. So far all was clear; but when little Ball-o'-fire's examination was entered into, though some embarrassment occurred, from his difficulty in speaking French, yet he positively declared that Walter Dixon's sword was drawn before the monk had struck his master's brother, and adhered to the declaration, in spite of the contradictions of the English officer, and the cross-examination of the Parisians.

Henry acknowledged that he could give no light upon the subject, as his back had been turned to Walter Dixon at the time; nor could the servants afford any information corroborative of either one statement or the other, as, when the first of them arrived in the room, the monk was already falling.

In the opinion of the Quaternier, who was full of most excellent differences, those contradictory statements were of the greatest importance to the circumstances of the case. If, after seeing a friend slain by another man, he argued, one draws

one's sword and slays the murderer, one is fully justified; for Heaven knows how many more murders that man might commit; but if the sword be drawn, as here stated, before a blow is struck, or, as the boy declares, before it is even menaced, it shows a predetermination in the drawer to kill some one. "I shall, therefore, certainly," he continued, "release all parties here present, except the aforesaid Walter Dixon, whom I shall carry with me to the Hôtel de Ville, to wait the farther perquisitions of the criminal lieutenant. All the others, however, must inscribe their names and places of dwelling in this book, that they may be called upon as witnesses, should the case require it; and in the meantime every one must quit the house, till such time as the proper officer, by the King appointed to collect the *droits d'aubaine*, have notice, and take heed, that his Majesty be not defrauded of his dues."

Walter Dixon threatened and remonstrated, but in vain. And after having enrolled all the names of the persons present, examined the whole premises, and locked the various doors, the Quaternier and his archers caused every one to vacate the saloon, in order that he might secure the last door. The wrath of the Parliamentary officer, however, knew no bounds; and as he passed out, he struck the page, whose testimony had occasioned his confinement, a violent blow with his clenched fist. The boy instantly betook himself to his dagger, and Walter Dixon's life would have been held by a frail tenure, had not one of the archers seized the page in his arms, and his master commanded him to sheath his weapon.

He did as he was ordered; but before he did so, he shook the blade at his adversary, adding the word, "Beware."

The Parliamentarian gave him a glance of scorn, and the Quaternier, after having informed the young cavalier that the following morning admittance would be given to himself, or any one on his part, to perform the last offices for the dead, led his prisoner away, and Henry Masterton turned towards his own dwelling. He had scarcely reached the gate of the court, however, when he was overtaken by his brother's servants, demanding payment of their wages; and though somewhat sick at the obtrusion of their petty self-interests upon the sorrows and distresses which at that moment occupied his mind, he informed them that, to the best of his belief, the inhuman and unjust law, which appropriated all the effects of a stranger dying in France to the crown, made a provision for the payment of all just debts. Nevertheless, to put them more at their ease, he gave them his address at the hotel of Monsieur de Vitray, and informed them that if their claims were not discharged by the commissioners of the aubainage, he would take care that they should be paid.

The female attendant of Lady Eleanor Fleming had been permitted by the Quaternier to keep possession of the vacant chambers in the lower part of the house; and as, from various circumstances, Henry was inclined to believe that she possessed a better mind than perhaps might have been expected, he spoke a few words of comfort and consolation to her, assuring her that he would do all in his power to make her future fate easy and comfortable.

"I am a Catholic, sir, as was my mistress," she replied, "and I desire nothing but to retire into a convent. I was brought up with my lady from her infancy, and I easily taught myself to have no object in life but her. I have seen her father first, and herself afterwards, throw away all the happiness that she might have enjoyed. With every gift that heaven could bestow—a splendid fortune—high rank—great beauty—fine talents—and, indeed, indeed, sir—though you think not—an excellent heart: from some error in her early education, I have seen her pass through life without happiness, and die a terrible and a painful death, at seven-and-twenty years of age. I have had enough of the world, sir, and all I wish is to leave it for ever."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE dull light of a short winter's day was beginning to draw to its close as Henry Masterton returned towards the hotel of Monsieur de Vitray. On entering the court, he found the whole house in confusion, and soon discovered, by the various exclamations of the servants, that he was himself the cause.

"Here he is! here he is!" cried one. "Run and tell monsieur," exclaimed another. "Monsieur has been seeking for you, sir, high and low," said a third.

"How could you be so imprudent, *mon cher ami*?" cried Monsieur de Vitray himself, coming down the steps of his house into the court to meet his young friend, and still habited in the cuirass and blue scarf which he had borne in the day's skirmish. "How could you be so imprudent? If you are not careful for your own sake, you should really be careful for the sake of my reputation. Your English friends will say that the Frenchman did not take sufficient charge of you, and it will get abroad that the French are an inhospitable people; whereas, on the contrary, if there be a land on earth which is really the temple of hospitality, it is France. I know my own incapacity, and my own imperfections, and I am perfectly aware that if you had fallen into the hands of more capable and wealthy

men than myself, and at a time when the tranquillity of the country permitted greater attention, you would have received a thousand times more kindness than I have had it in my power to show. Nevertheless, the will has not been wanting, and you must not endanger your own life, and my credit, and the honour of France, by such imprudence. I could not and would not believe the servants who told me you had left the house."

To stop him before he got to the end of his speech was impossible, and Henry was obliged to hear him out. As soon as he paused, however, he told him that the cause of his going forth was one of too much consequence to be neglected, and that, during his absence from the house, he had met with many circumstances to distress and horrify him, in regard to which he would beg his counsel and assistance.

"Willingly, willingly, my dear young gentleman," replied Monsieur de Vitray; "willingly shall you have such poor advice as my mind can furnish, and such poor assistance as my power can afford. But let us in out of the cold air. *Ventre Saint Gris!* I find I have a touch of the rheumatism, and I do not bear my cuirass as easily as I did in former days. Go into the little cabinet; we will sup alone by a blazing fire, and I will bid the servants deny me to every one but our friend Dom André; and his advice, you know, may be very serviceable also."

"No, no!" replied Henry, with a shudder, while the image of the Benedictine, as he had last seen him, came up before his eyes. "No, no! he will not come this night—nor ever again," he muttered to himself.

"Well, well!" rejoined Monsieur de Vitray. "We will shut our door, then, on all the world. I will but cast off this heavy cuirass, and change my apparel, and will join you in a moment."

"I too must change my dress," replied Henry, "for my coat is stiff with blood."

"With blood!" exclaimed Monsieur de Vitray: "you are not surely wounded again! Young gentleman, you will contrive to abridge your space of life to a very narrow span, if you do not take better care."

"It is not my own blood," replied Henry, in a melancholy tone, "though too near akin to mine, unhappily."

"What, an affair of honour!" cried Monsieur de Vitray, in a lighter one; "you were not fit, indeed, my young friend; you were not fit. But since it is so, change your garb, come down to my little cabinet, and we will talk it all over alone."

Thus saying, he skipped up the stairs with strange symptoms in all his movements of rheumatism struggling hard with habitual grace and activity. Henry, in the meantime, proceeded

slowly to his chamber, changed his dress, which was stiff with his brother's blood, and then descending to Monsieur de Vitray's private cabinet, cast himself into a chair before the fire, to wait that gentleman's return. As he sat there, for the first time during the whole day he felt his wound: so absorbing had been the interest of the scenes through which he had passed, that they had not only occupied all his thoughts, but seemed also to have deadened his very corporeal feelings; and it is possible he might still have forgotten that he was wounded, had not the remonstrances of Monsieur de Vitray recalled his situation to his mind. But his own sufferings did not now divert his mind from all the fearful remembrance of that morning's events. The windows were closed, the old dark tapestry hung all round, the fagots blazed and crackled bright and loud, the chair in which he sat was easy and soft; but it seemed as if every accessory of comfort and luxury, and the warm, cheerful arts of life, but the more strongly called up to memory those he had left cold and stiff upon the bloody floor where they had fallen, unwatched, untended, and alone.

Monsieur de Vitray, however, did not suffer him long to indulge such sad thoughts, but rejoined him in a few moments, giving a thousand orders as he came for serving supper in an hour, bringing lights, and refusing entrance to every one during the evening.

"Well, my young friend," he said, as he also seated himself before the wide chimney, "well, how you have chanced to quarrel with any one since you have been in my house, or how any one has chanced to quarrel with you, puzzles me much. Nevertheless, as it is so, it ——"

"But, my dear sir, it is not so," interrupted the young cavalier, taking the only opportunity of cutting across his good friend's oration, before it deviated into the infinite. "You have rather misunderstood me. The matter, I am sorry to say, is far worse than a simple duel, if you will be kind enough to hear me state it to you."

"I am all attention, my young friend," replied Monsieur de Vitray; "nevertheless, allow me to remark that, whatever be the circumstances, France is a country in which equity and justice reign supreme. If any one be injured, in what country is redress so easy as in France—if any one be afflicted, where can he find that consolation which is to affliction what justice is to injury, so soon as in France? Solon himself never devised laws so well calculated to promote the security of individuals, the tranquillity of the public, the protection of the innocent, and the punishment of the guilty, as those which we enjoy in France: and, as I feel perfectly certain that you have done no-

thing on which the brow of justice should frown, I congratulate you on being able to seek the protection of her smile."

Henry had almost abandoned his purpose of consulting Monsieur de Vitray, in despair at the first mention of France, but, when he found his oration so soon brought to an end, he proceeded to relate to him all the events of the morning without concealment or reserve. The naturally fine and sensitive mind of his hearer was deeply affected at the detail, and, with the drops really standing in his eyes, he pressed Henry's hand, saying, in a very different tone from that which Walter Dixon had employed—"I congratulate you, with tears, my dear young friend, on being the head of your house. I know how it must pain you to become, as you have, the rightful owner of a high station—and I hope, too, of a high fortune—by the cruel death of your unhappy brother; but, at the same time, it is surely matter of congratulation that an illustrious name, and a long inheritance of honour, have fallen into hands whence they will derive additional splendour. Had it remained with your brother, my dear sir, the glory of your family must have slumbered in obscurity, or have been tarnished by open vice, and that must give you some consolation for the loss of one whom, however faulty, you seem to have deeply loved."

A desultory conversation of some length then ensued, in the course of which every little circumstance which Henry had omitted was detailed, and many questions asked, and no small horror, and wonder, and commiseration were expressed by Monsieur de Vitray at the tragedy of the morning.

"In regard to Sir Andrew Fleming," he continued, "I cannot help regretting him deeply; I have known him since he first came to France, as a young man, to perfect himself by travel. He was then as noble a cavalier as you would wish to look upon, skilful to a miracle in the use of arms, and though sometimes sterner than his youth could justify, he was not averse to innocent pleasure. He was rather wayward and fitful, however, which we, his companions, attributed to a certain unhappy drop in his blood, which might verge towards insanity. His father had died by his own hand, we heard, and though the lady, his mother, was said to be as simply plodding a dame as any in all Europe, yet enough of his father's spirit reigned in his bosom to make him wild and violent in his passions, dark and singular in his caprices. When in Italy, we were told that he had nearly renounced the world, and become a barefooted Capuchin. He was driven from Rome for killing a cardinal's nephew in a duel, and then wandered afar through the East, I have heard him say, and even to Jerusalem itself; but still, whenever he passed through France, he failed not to pause for at least ten days in my dwelling."

"And yet you were very different men," said the young cavalier. "I should scarcely have thought that the humour of the one would have suited that of the other."

"We were, indeed, as different as two men could be," replied De Vitray; "but we had known each other long, and there were a thousand pleasant memories common to us both. Our friendship, too, had been formed in the expansive time of youth, when hearts are open and soft; of the impressions then received, many, indeed, are wiped out—obliterated—effaced and changed—but those which do last are hardened by the petrifying power of time into lines that death only can destroy. You have heard, of course, the story of his love, his marriage, his jealousy, and his separation from his wife. He came over again to France with feelings excited almost to madness; the only sane principle that seemed left in his mind was the conviction of its being absolutely necessary for him to absent himself from her and from her family, lest, as he said, he should destroy them all. Time, however, moderated his feelings; and the better spirit which always governed him when he was cool, taught him to reproach and check himself for much of what had passed. He inflicted on himself a deep and bitter penance, and, as he felt the separation must be for ever, he qualified himself according to the institute, and entered the Society of Jesus.

"Three years then elapsed without my seeing him, and it was the spring of the last year when he visited me near Dol. He was then on his way to England, his wife's father having died, and his jealousy of her conduct having again revived. He was accompanied, also, by another Jesuit, who went, I believe, on some political intrigue, and by an English officer long in the service of France, whose purpose was to offer his sword to his native king, the moment he was freed from his engagement to the French crown; but it proved too late. The whole was over before he arrived."

"May I ask the names of his companions?" demanded Henry Masterton, eagerly, a sudden gleam of light pouring in upon some points that had long been obscure to his mind's eye.

"Certainly," replied Monsieur de Vitray; "the one I knew slightly, the other I still know well. The first was Du Tillet, a Jesuit, and an old friend of Sir Andrew Fleming; the other was the well-known General St. Maur. But why do you ask?"

"I will tell you in a moment," replied the young cavalier, "but first let me inquire, was there not a striking likeness between Du Tillet and the man who died to-day?"

"None at all," the other answered: "yet there might be a

little," he added, after a moment's thought, "but very slight; they were both dark men, and somewhat about the same height, but that was all, at least to my perception."

"I saw Du Tillet the very spring to which you allude," replied the young cavalier; "and it now strikes me that it is the remembrance of his face which has been haunting me every time I have looked upon Sir Andrew Fleming. The likeness is so strong."

"You are mistaken," answered Monsieur de Vitray; "Du Tillet you could not see, for he died within five days of his landing at Exmouth of a fever caught in a small cabin, where they lay concealed on their first arrival; it was Sir Andrew Fleming himself you saw. Being better known, and having more enemies than the other, he took Du Tillet's name. He told me also, when you arrived at my house on that dark stormy night, that you had rendered him some great service in England; but begged me, as in his monk's dress you did not recognise him, to say nothing which would lead your mind to the subject, giving, as a reason, that he was at deadly feud with your brother. How deadly, I now too well perceive."

Henry paused and thought deeply for several minutes. "You are right," he said at length; "I now see it all. How long is it since this unfortunate man last returned to France?"

"It was towards the end of the month of June," replied Monsieur de Vitray, "and he came back with one or two severe wounds yet unclosed."

"They were dealt by the hand of my unfortunate brother," said the young cavalier: "doubtless, their meeting on that occasion also was concerted by one who has since carried his schemes, I feel sure, to a more successful conclusion. I cannot prove it, it is true," he added, after thinking for several minutes over all the circumstances in which the fate and actions of his brother might have been influenced by the schemes of Walter Dixon—"I cannot prove it, it is true; but I feel as certain as that I now live, that the Walter Dixon, who, as I told you, is at this moment in prison for the death of the monk, brought back my brother this day with the purpose of exciting Sir Andrew Fleming and himself to destroy each other. The estates of his cousin, Lady Eleanor, were, it seems, only refused to him by the Council of State, on the score of Sir Andrew Fleming's prior right; and he has taken care to remove that objection."

"Doubtless, doubtless!" replied Monsieur de Vitray. "I have known many a cunning man labour long and painfully to bring another to commit a crime for his profit, which he would not do for himself but in the last extremity: but we must not

forget that, as our law goes, the proof of an interested motive, in slaying my unhappy and misjudging friend, would do much to give him over to the executioner."

"Such a motive would be difficult to prove," answered the young cavalier, "and I have but to offer simple suspicion. He, too, avenged my brother's death, and I must not lend my voice to hang him for that very act. However it may be, I cannot believe that the Almighty justice will fail to overtake that man—that very Almighty justice which he mocks, by making a glory of his bold villany; and I will trust to it to avenge upon his head all the sorrows and the ruin that his machinations have brought upon my house."

"Be it so, my young friend!" said Monsieur de Vitray; "you judge sanely, and far be it from me, either, to doubt that God will avenge his own attributes. Nor have I any cause to blame the man, though my poor friend fell under his hand. He fell in the commission of an act, which, criminal in any one, was still more criminal in the minister of a God of peace. He took upon him, I am afraid, the religious habit, not because he felt within him that mortification of the passions which fits man for the service of God, but rather because he hoped that that service would aid him in controlling those passions; and, as might be expected, the passions triumphed over the vows; the ordinance was forgotten, and the priest of a bloodless religion became a murderer. Fain, fain would I have persuaded him, from the first, to pause ere he exchanged the more easy order of Loyola for the stricter rule of the Benedictines; opposition made him but the more impatient, and all the prescribed forms were abridged, to favour his speedy admission to an order, which he has been the first, I believe, on record to stain with bloodguiltiness. But here comes Bernardin to announce our evening meal, during which you can tell me what is the subject on which you were about to command my aid or counsel."

"It was merely in regard to the rights of escheatage, or aubaine, as it is called in France, that I was going to ask your advice in particular," replied the cavalier. "Of course my brother's servants and general debts will be paid before the King of France lays his hands upon the effects he leaves."

At the word aubaine, good Monsieur de Vitray coloured deeply, and played with the strings of his collar, repeating several times, "In France, my young friend, in France, you see,—in France the *droits d'aubaine*, or right by which the King claims the property of foreigners dying on the soil—but supper waits, we will speak of the *droits d'aubaine* hereafter."

It was evident enough, that Monsieur de Vitray was not a little puzzled how to reconcile the existence of such an inhuman practice with the laws which, he boasted, excelled those of

Solon himself.* Henry Masterton, however, felt no disposition to force him into a defence of the *droits d'aubaine*, and proceeding to the adjoining chamber, restricted his questions concerning the King's claims in this matter solely to the point, whether his brother's debts would be discharged.

"Beyond all doubt," replied Monsieur de Vitray; "the King merely demands the effects left by a stranger, after all other claims upon them are discharged. And as you say that your brother possessed a considerable sum in the hands of some merchants, vested in bills of exchange, I doubt not that that also may be secured to you: but we will consult some lawyer on the subject."

Henry was now a little embarrassed in turn, and, much to the surprise of Monsieur de Vitray, he positively declined taking any steps to save the large sum which his brother had brought with him from England. He knew that Frank had carried with him from Masterton House no means of procuring such a resource; and he felt convinced internally, that the sum had been raised by the sale of plate and jewels belonging to Lady Eleanor Fleming. To appropriate money thus obtained, was of course out of the question; and feeling a disinclination to mention his motive to Monsieur de Vitray, he simply declined taking any step for its recovery, without assigning a reason.

The good Frenchman argued and persuaded, talked and wondered, embarrassed himself more than once in the rights and wrongs of the *droits d'aubaine*, got himself profoundly puzzled between his sense of justice and his love of everything French, and eventually gave up trying to induce Henry to pursue his claim, as much from his own embarrassment as from the other's firmness.

He promised, however, at the young nobleman's request, to employ some of the *gens de robe*, to see the servants properly paid; and this having been settled, Henry proposed to retire to his chamber. "I have much sad business," he said, "to transact to-morrow; I am fatigued enough to-day, and, indeed, I feel that I need some repose."

"If you will follow my advice, my young friend," replied Monsieur de Vitray, "you will not stir out of these doors to-morrow. Leave all the sad business you mention to me. It luckily happens that a truce of ten days has been agreed upon this very afternoon. I am perfectly idle, and will see everything performed as you could wish. Under the circumstances that exist, as a foreigner and a stranger, you would run the risk of infinite uncomfort in fulfilling the task you speak of

* It is scarcely necessary to state that the *droit d'aubaine* has long ceased to exist.

yourself. In every great town there is a rabble ; and though that of Paris is more polished and civilized than that of any other nation upon earth, it is a rabble still. I have known many disgraceful scenes take place at the funerals of heretics ; and, as in the present case there is a terrible story attached to the business, you will but make yourself an object of wonder and attention, if not of insult, by being present. You require repose too, indeed. You have done enough to kill a man in your state already. I wish you would take some refreshment. If you cannot eat, as you seem to refuse your supper, drink one glass of this Burgundy, mixed with equal parts of water. Exhaustion is what you have now to fear. After that, go to bed, repose yourself all to-morrow, and leave the rest to me."

Henry Masterton took the wine and water that his friend recommended, but he did not yet leave him. "As you are so kind," he replied, "as to take upon you what must be a painful task, even to the most indifferent, I will, as you say, trust to you entirely. The only wish I have to express is, that the whole may be conducted with decent privacy. Under such circumstances, the least ostentation would be vicious. The funeral of the unhappy man who slew my brother will, I suppose——"

"Of course, it will be conducted by his convent, to which I will send notice of the event," interposed Monsieur de Vitray. "Shocked and astonished will the reverend fathers be ; for though, to those who knew Sir Andrew Fleming in the world, such an unhappy termination of his existence has nothing in it to excite wonder, the holy brothers of Dom André suspected not, I believe, the violent passions which animated his bosom. I remember to have heard General St. Maur declare, in his gay way, that when they were serving together in the Low Countries, Sir Andrew Fleming's whole life was either a dream or duel."

"As you have mentioned General St. Maur again," said the young cavalier, "I would fain hear something more of him. I have a letter to him from England, which I must deliver ere I proceed on what will prove, I am afraid, a long and painful search. Pray God it be not a fruitless one ! But before you speak of Monsieur St. Maur, let me beg you to request the superior of the Benedictine convent to make close search amongst the papers of the dead man, in order to discover any trace that may exist of the dwelling of the Lady Emily Langleigh."

"Put the name and the question down on paper," replied Monsieur de Vitray ; "give it to me to-morrow morning, and I will undertake that, if any traces do exist, they shall be communicated to you. As to Monsieur de St. Maur, I will intro-

duce you to him when you will. He resides not five miles from Paris, and is gay, lively, brilliant, brave, and generous ; in short, in all but birth he is a Frenchman. He fell into some troubles, I have heard, in England, many years ago ; came over here with a sufficient, though not a large fortune, and seeing at once the infinite superiority of France to every other country on the earth, he has made it his home. For employment, he entered the service, distinguished himself highly, rose to the rank of General, and Heaven knows what he might have been, had he not been a heretic—I beg your pardon—a Protestant. He now lives very much retired, has a beautiful small house about two leagues from the town, a fine park and garden ; an establishment that goes like clock-work, and the finest hyacinths in Europe. By the way, I will write to him this very night, and communicate your wish to see him.”

After this, the conversation rambled for some time over various unimportant subjects ; and at length, Monsieur de Vitray, having been withheld from his favourite theme by the interests of the matter before him longer than ever was known, verged rapidly into a disquisition on the beauties and excellence of France. In the present instance, his oration proved highly serviceable, in a way which he did not intend, for, acting as a soporific on the excited mind of his young friend, it procured him a night of sound and refreshing sleep. The next morning, when he woke, he found that Monsieur de Vitray had long gone forth, and to his surprise discovered that it was verging towards midday. But the exciting and continued occupation of his mind during the former day, and the long and profound sleep which he had since enjoyed, had acted far from unfavourably on his health. The surgeon, on visiting him, declared that he was in every respect infinitely better than he had yet been, and advised, as the best means of completing the cure, gentle and regular exercise. Henry, nevertheless, remained within during the whole day, pondering over much that was bitter, and much that was gloomy. He felt and knew, that according to the rapid and somewhat (he thought) irreverent custom of the country, the body of his last relative was, in all probability, even then being carried on its bloody bier to the cold earth. The separation, it is true, had taken place ; death had closed his adamantine door between them, and, in the eye of both religion and philosophy, there was nothing more to lose, now that the soul was departed. But unhappily, on this earth, we are so much more familiar with the body than the spirit—the body is so much more the object of all our senses, the corporeal faculties are so entirely the medium of our communication with the mind within, that though we may abstractedly regret the absence of the feeling soul that we loved, we

cannot but experience a deep pang at parting with the clay to which long habit of commune had endeared us—which was the residence of the being to whom our best affections were given—which was the more familiar minister of a king, whom we knew alone by the actions of his servants.

Henry Masterton wept the death of his brother more, perhaps, on the day which saw his remains consigned to the earth, than even at the moment of his fall. Nor did he mourn him the less, that in the memory of his life there was much matter for sorrow and reproach; that many a weakness and many a fault were written in the record of his actions. His tears were the bitterer, but not the fewer, that while he wept his brother, he had also to weep his errors, and to weep that those errors could never be repented or atoned. Thus the day passed by, and late in the evening Monsieur de Vitray returned. He pressed the hand of his young friend, merely saying, "It is all over! General Dixon, too," he added, "by the favour of some of his friends in Paris, and the want of any evidence of evil intent, has been liberated, his act being construed by the criminal lieutenant as mere sudden retaliation upon a murderer, without forethought or malice. Here is a singular note enough," continued Monsieur de Vitray, "which has just been put into my hands in answer to the one I sent to the General St. Maur. Hear what he writes:—

"General St. Maur is much obliged to the Marquis de Vitray for the proposal he has been kind enough to make, but, as he has not the slightest inclination to see Lord Masterton, he will thank him not to bring him."

Henry coloured deeply, and Monsieur de Vitray shrugged his shoulders, observing, "C'est un original!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE young cavalier made no comment upon the somewhat rude reply which had been returned to his friend's letter. "It was on his own business that I sought this General St. Maur," he thought, "and whether—as from the wording of his letter it would appear he does—he mistakes me for my brother or not, the answer he has chosen to send is equally uncivil. The matter seemed in some degree explained, indeed, by Monsieur de Vitray saying that, although the English officer had not absolutely taken arms on either side in the idle war of the Fronde, he had decidedly favoured the court party, against which Monsieur de Vitray had acted. The conversation on that sub-

ject, however, dropped there; and Henry Masterton resolved to devote his whole exertions to discovering Emily Langleigh, without taking any extraordinary trouble to benefit a man who repelled his first advance so rudely. Monsieur de Vitray's kindness, it proved, had comprised within one day the execution of all that his young friend had entrusted to his care.

"You were not up this morning," he said, "when I set out, but I had not forgotten the question which you bade me ask of the superior of the Benedictines of the Quartier St. Jacques, and as of course a part of my melancholy task lay with him, I put your inquiries according to your wish. Very few papers of any kind were left by the unhappy man who is dead, and those are letters. The superior was all kindness and liberality; and, knowing me personally, as well as my intimacy with the deceased, he permitted me to examine such documents as could be found. The only reference to the Lady Emily Langleigh that we were able to discover, was contained in a letter from some person in England, who had been apparently directed by Sir Andrew Fleming to watch the motions of your brother. This epistle went to inform him that the news was certain; that Colonel Masterton was, beyond all doubt, going to marry the Lady Emily Langleigh, and that, therefore, there was not the slightest chance of his return to Penford-bourne. It is dated two or three months since, and is signed 'Gabriel Jones.'"

"The villain has been playing into the hands of all parties," muttered the young nobleman; and Monsieur de Vitray went on to assure him that the prior had translated several letters for him into French, and that he had himself run over all the rest without finding the name of Emily Langleigh repeated.

Henry's only hope now was Walter Dixon, who seemed to have been but too well acquainted with the movements of every one whose affairs had any relation to his own; and though he felt an unspeakable reluctance to hold any communication with a man on whose motives or actions he could not for an instant rely, yet the hopes of recovering the traces of Emily Langleigh were superior to every other consideration, and he determined to seek him out without delay. In the meantime, he explained his difficulties to Monsieur de Vitray, in whose zeal, activity, and good sense he had by this time learned to place the greatest reliance, notwithstanding the foible that obscured the better qualities of his mind. The worthy marquis entered into his cause with all the eager and chivalrous kindness which might have been expected from a young man of five-and-twenty. He declared that it was the most extraordinary and unfortunate incident that ever was heard. It was quite a romance! it was equal to anything in *Astrea*!

"However," he continued, "France is a country, my young

friend, where a man may do anything he pleases, provided he violates no law. He may conceal himself for ever, if he chooses it, without the possibility of any one discovering him: such are the wonderful facilities for privacy and secrecy which this country affords above all others on the face of the earth."

"Your tidings, my dear sir," replied the young cavalier, "are not particularly consolatory for the seekers, at all events."

"But mark me! mark me, milor!" rejoined de Vitray, "I only spoke of those who wish to conceal themselves; for, on the other hand, if a person wishes to discover the dwelling of any one who has no intention or purpose of hiding themselves from his search, he will meet with as many facilities in the pursuit, as there are, in the former case, facilities of evasion. Now I do not suppose that your lady-love—as I very well see this lady is—has any inclination to conceal her dwelling from you, and therefore I bid you take heart, and never fear, for that, if she be in France, aided by the enthusiasm of a true Frenchman, though an unworthy one, you will very soon find her."

Some general plans were then arranged; but Monsieur de Vitray at length broke suddenly across all other topics, exclaiming, "But, good heaven! I had forgot, and so had you, my dear friend, a matter of great importance. Before we proceed to seek out the bride, we had better secure the means of supporting her with honour and propriety. Besides, common politeness requires you to pay your respects in the very first instance to the Duke de Longueville, and offer him your thanks for the post he has been kind enough to bestow on you. Let us do that to-morrow; it will but take you half-an-hour; and having made sure of the appointment, and obtained sufficient leave to absent yourself, we shall proceed on our search with redoubled vigour."

"I scarce think," replied Henry Masterton, "that decency will permit me to appear in public society so soon after my brother's death. The Duke of Longueville will, I feel sure, pardon the neglect under the circumstances in which I am placed; and the day after to-morrow we will wait upon his Highness. To-morrow I will seek out Walter Dixon, and discover what knowledge he possesses of my Emily's abode—an employment in the course of which I shall be called to mingle with no company of strangers, which would, I suppose, be inevitably the case at the house of Monsieur de Longueville."

Monsieur de Vitray smiled; for however blinded, in some respects, by one particular theory, he was by no means blind to the human heart in general.

"You will do well to consider, my dear young gentleman," he said calmly and kindly, "whether the loss you may sustain

by neglecting the Duke de Longueville, would not be greater than any that the temporary delay in seeking Walter Dixon could occasion. I tell you fairly, without wishing to make a merit of it, this post of governor of the chateau of Feschamp was wrung out of Monsieur de Longueville by no small petition and some service, contrary to the craving voices of a thousand applicants, who had to recommend them, besides other qualities, that of being Frenchmen."

"If that be the case, my dear sir," replied Henry, "I will not hesitate, but go. I would not for the world, that a thing you generously solicited and obtained on my behalf, should be lost by negligence of mine, real or apparent."

"Spoken like a Frenchman!" replied Monsieur de Vitray, embracing him. "It will be easy to find out this priest-slaying Walter Dixon after we have seen the duke, and I will accompany you in pursuit of him."

"That which is delayed," thought Henry Masterton, "is very often never performed at all;" but without further opposing Monsieur de Vitray's desire, he bade him good night, and retired to rest.

The following morning the young cavalier rose earlier than he had lately done, and dressing himself in a suit of deep mourning which had been made for him during his convalescence, and for which weeds of sorrow he had now the additional cause of a brother's death, he descended to the *salle à manger* of the dwelling, where he was soon after joined by Monsieur de Vitray. He was of course much paler than he had appeared in former days, from the long and severe illness he had undergone, but his beard and mustachios had had time to grow since his return from England, and in every respect, except the floating locks which distinguished the English Cavalier from the Parliamentary or Roundhead, and which when once cut off, required years of care to regain, he had re-assumed the appearance of his rank and character.

Monsieur de Vitray, who set no small store by dress, however much his own verged occasionally into the absurd, congratulated the young Lord Masterton upon his appearance; and after having breakfasted, they set out together for the Hotel de Ville, to which place the Duke de Longueville and his family had removed, to favour one of the manœuvres of the Fronde.

A multitude of other cavaliers had arrived before them, as was evident from the number of servants and horses which thronged round the perron of the Hotel de Ville. Few carriages were seen, and fewer still of chairs, announcing that the assembly then meeting was held by the duke himself; and that the hour had not yet arrived for his lovely duchess,

formerly the beautiful Marie de Bourbon, to show herself to the world.

Every servant, who lingered there with his lord's horses, had some ornament of a particular kind of blue, the peculiar colour of the Fronde, about his person; and many a stare of lackeyish impudence was turned upon the page of the young cavalier, as he appeared amongst the rest, habited like his lord, in deep mourning, without any of the marks of party on his person.

Monsieur de Vitray and his friend dismounted at the steps; and, entering the great vestibule, which was filled by a buzzing murmuring crowd, they made their way to the staircase which led to the apartments assigned to Monsieur and Madame de Longueville. The first door of those private apartments was opened to them by a servant in livery, and admitted them into an antechamber, whence a second door, opened by themselves, led them to a large hall, which they found occupied by about a hundred persons, grouped together in separate knots, each talking and gesticulating with all the vehemence of faction, "all sound and fury, signifying nothing."

It is not my purpose here to give a detailed account, or rather, I should say, a series of portraits of the leaders of the Fronde, most of whom have, within the recollection of us all, distinguished themselves in a nobler sphere; but when the young Lord Masterton had entered, Monsieur de Vitray called his attention to them, one by one, as they stood in the centre of their different groups, each surrounded by his crowd of friends and dependents, who, in the excited spirit of a turbulent epoch, looked up to their several chiefs with devoted attachment. Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that this attachment deviated at all into awe; so far from it indeed was the state of the case in reality, that every partisan deemed it his privilege, though he would have followed his leader to death in the field, to turn him into ridicule in the saloon if he thought fit.

The first group that the two new comers passed, was placed in the angle of a window near the door, and surrounded the person of the well-known Marquis de Noirmoutier, who, booted and cuirassed, notwithstanding the existence of a truce, seemed ever ready for the field. He was giving an account, at the moment, of a skirmish near St. Denis, and was painting in high and exaggerated colours the bravery of the Parisians, and in terms little less flattering was speaking of himself.

"So, then, you see, Monsieur de Jaumier," he continued, addressing a little dingy atrabilious-looking personage, who was the ostensible listener, "so, then, you see, the enemy, repulsed in all points, went off to the right, while leading up our horse beyond the little field of vines—you know the vineyard belonging to Francier the eschevin—well, leading up our horse beyond

that field, we charged the enemy; but at that moment an unlucky ball killed my horse, and thrown to the ground, I was surrounded by the enemy, who, more like pickpockets than soldiers, would have stripped me in a short time, had not our cavaliers come up. As it was, they tore from me a part of my accoutrements, which has hung at my side in many a bloody day."

"Monsieur means that he lost his *haut de chausse*," said the person he addressed, turning to the rest of the party; and the young Englishman had only time to hear Noirmoutier explain, amidst the laughter of the rest, that it was the sheath of his sword that he had lost, when Monsieur de Vitray proceeded onward. He stopped for a moment, however, at another group, not far from the first, where a handsome but slightly-made gentleman was conversing in a much quieter tone with four or five men of far more distinguished appearance than the rest. He was speaking with apparent ease and grace; but the moment he perceived Monsieur de Vitray and the young cavalier with their eyes fixed upon him, he paused and coloured, then advanced a step, and bowed to Henry's companion, slightly noticing by the same inclination the young Englishman himself.

"That is the Prince de Marsillac,"* said Monsieur de Vitray. "Will you come and speak with him?" and without waiting for a reply, he led the way into the group, and introduced his friend.

"While Monsieur de Longueville, the Duke de Bouillon, and even your friend, Monsieur d'Elbeuf, Monsieur de Vitray, are conversing in the inner chamber for the good of the nation, we are here trying to solve enigmas," said the prince, after the first salutation. "Here is De la Mothe asks what is the blackest spot in the human heart? I cannot tell, I say, because there are so many, that to my eyes it seems all black together. Can you tell, De Vitray?"

"Faith, I cannot tell, Monsieur le Prince," replied the other. "For my part, I like to look upon the bright side of things, and the heart of a true Frenchman is to me all light."

"All lightness you mean, De Vitray," answered the prince; and as the other, with a shake of the head and a smile took his leave and walked on, La Rochefoucault looked after him, laughing. "Do you know," he asked of the Marshal de la Mothe, who stood by him, "do you know the principle on which that good soul adores France as he does?"

"Faith, not I," answered the other, "without it be a combination of patriotism and madness."

"Not a whit—not a whit"—replied La Rochefoucault. "He adores France, because he adores himself, and because he is a

* Better known as La Rochefoucault, author of the famous *Maxims*.

Frenchman—and, after all, my dear De la Mothe, what is patriotism? Is it not that we love our country because it is ours—because it has something to do with us?—It is all self—self—self. Tell me, when Cato fled to Utica, was it Rome that Cato loved, or Cato? No, no, La Mothe, if he had loved Rome, he would have stayed in Rome, and done the best for her that he could. But Cato was his Rome, and so he carried Rome to Utica.”

“You speak in riddles, Monsieur le Princee,” answered the marshal.

“Perhaps I do,” replied La Rochefoucault, turning away; “but look! Monsieur de Vitray is going to interrupt the profound consultation of our noble leaders, for which Monsieur d’Elbeuf will thank him, and Monsieur de Bouillon will wish him at the devil—simply, because the one is never so happy as when he is standing on tiptoe, and because the other has the gout so bad, he has no toes to stand upon.”

Monsieur de Vitray did, indeed, as the other remarked, venture to pass the limits of the great saloon in which the party was assembled, and to enter a chamber, the door of which stood half open, at the extremity of the great hall. When, however, he perceived the several commanders-in-chief of the *army of the King under the orders of Parliament*, as it was called, sitting together in close consultation, he was about to draw back; but the Duke d’Elbeuf chanced to perceive his entrance, and instantly beckoned him forward. “Come in! come in! De Vitray,” he exclaimed. “We have done, or nearly done—Have we not, Messieurs?”

“As your Highness thinks fit,” replied Monsieur de Bouillon with a bitter sneer; “the princes of the House of Lorraine always make shorter work of their affairs than other men.” Thus saying, he rose from his seat, and bowing distantly to Monsieur de Vitray, turned upon his heel.

The Duke of Longueville rose also, and welcomed Henry and his companion with more warmth and courtesy. The young Englishman, seeing evidently that their coming had interrupted business of far more serious import, soon brought his audience to an end, and, after having returned his thanks to the duke for the honourable post he had conferred upon him, and requested permission to absent himself yet for a short time from its duties, he took leave and turned towards the door. Monsieur de Vitray, however, had still his compliment to make, which occupied a longer space; and, before it was concluded, one after another had dropped in from without, so that the room was full, and the consultation for the day was of course at an end. Nevertheless it had probably been carried as far as the Duke of Longueville thought necessary, for, without looking in

the least like a man who had been interrupted *mal-à-propos*, he listened to Monsieur de Vitray with a patient smile, and only cut across his speech by demanding his opinion on some subject whereon the other was really calculated to judge. The duke then slightly alluded to the reports that were already current in Paris regarding the death of the young cavalier's brother; but he did so delicately, as a man of good breeding and of the world, seeming to speak of it more in a tone of condolence than inquisitiveness.

Henry replied briefly, as also did Monsieur de Vitray; but, as the latter was taking his leave, the duke—instigated perhaps by more curiosity than *bienséance* permitted him to show before the young Englishman—requested his companion, in a low voice, to sup in the apartments of the duchess that night, an invitation to which Monsieur de Vitray replied by a low inclination and a promise to comply.

As he left that chamber, however, and proceeded to the one beyond, he took far more pains than necessary to explain to the young English nobleman, that the cause of his not having been included in the Duke of Longueville's invitation arose solely from consideration for the recent loss he had suffered. "France is a country, my young friend," he said, "where politeness and attention to strangers is carried to the very height of refinement. Now some people might think that the duke would have done better to invite you; but he, on the contrary, at once comprehending how impossible it was for you to accept, and yet how difficult it would be to refuse a prince of the blood, or rather a princess of the blood, would not put you to the pain of——"

At that moment some one laid his hand upon the worthy marquis's arm, and, turning round, he both saw, and, by changing his position, exposed to the sight of Henry Masterton, the figure of a person whom neither of them had expected to meet in that place. It was that of a tall florid handsome man, considerably past the middle age, but still hale and hearty, and with an air of frank and easy independence, which spoke him as free from bodily infirmity as from the difficulties of station. He was habited in a suit of dark marone cloth, was exquisitely neat in all his apparel, and wore one of those large wigs which, though common, and I might say universal in our own days, were then rare. His countenance was one not easily forgotten, and Henry Masterton instantly remembered the General St. Maur, whom he had seen a year before in company with Sir Andrew Fleming.

"Monsieur de Vitray!" he said, pressing the hand of the marquis:—"But here is one surely whom I am bound to welcome too, and to thank for good service done in former days. You look cold, young gentleman: do I not see Master Henry Masterton?"

"Not three days ago, sir," replied Henry, "you would have been perfectly right in speaking to me by that name; but I am sorry to say, that since that time, I have a sad right to call myself Lord Masterton."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the old officer; "indeed!—has that great busy-body, Death, been inviting such young guests to his house, and taking no heed of such meet and worthy company as you and I would make, De Vitray?" The marquis looked a little hurt, but the other continued, "Good faith, but this is sad though! I deemed not that the grim abhorred monster would yet, for many a day, have knocked at the door of the gay young gallant whom I saw the other morning riding by St. Denis in all the pride of that cowardly thing life. In some of these cursed squabbles, doubtless, he fell?"

Henry was silent, and he would have given much to have kept his friend quiescent also; but Monsieur de Vitray lost no time in drawing the general into a corner, and whispering in his ear the whole detail of the late Lord Masterton's death; nor did he want the gratification in return, of seeing in the old officer's countenance as much of astonishment, horror, and concern, as he could possibly expect.

"And poor Fleming!" exclaimed General St. Maur, when the other concluded, "to die thus at last! Yet I cannot but grieve for that unhappy boy, cut off in the midst of his youth, and, unhappily, in the midst of his sins. 'Tis ever thus in the world; we cast from us pure gold, catch at the tinsel, and die just as we are learning to distinguish the one from the other. However, my Lord Masterton, the solitude in which I live, and the circumstance of Paris, which—with reverence be it spoken in this place—puts me in mind of the stomach in the revolt of the members, and is likely to get no food without she conform—the circumstance of Paris, I say, shutting her gates against friends and foes, have prevented me from hearing this sad news sooner, and, consequently, I am afraid, have made me guilty of great rudeness in a note sent to Monsieur de Vitray last night, of which my intention, as far as yourself is concerned, was quite innocent."

"I certainly was not aware, sir, of having personally given you any offence," replied the young cavalier; "nor am I yet informed how any such offence was offered to you by my brother."

"Why, sir, I was somewhat like a certain friend of mine, who went out to shoot wolves," replied the old officer, "and hearing that there was a wolf in a belt of planting, he fired into it at the first rustle, and killed one of his own cows. Now, I had heard a good deal of your brother, sir,—I would not wound your feelings; but that which I did hear did not make me much covet his acquaintance. I never think it right to do anything

by halves; and when my good friend here proposed to introduce to me Lord Masterton, I—fancying it to be a man I did not approve, returned such an answer as was likely to put an end to the business at once.—And now, my young friend, will you accept an old soldier's apology, offered frankly? If you do not," he added, with a smile, "you shall have to ask the honour, and the pleasure, and the felicity of my acquaintance most humbly, I can assure you, before I grant it."

"I will do myself no such injustice as to reject now what may be indeed difficult to gain hereafter," replied Henry; "the more especially," he added, "as I am charged with a letter for you, which I might find no opportunity of delivering to you afterwards, were I once to set off on the long and weary search which I am afraid is before me."

"A long and weary search!" exclaimed the old officer; "I love a search beyond all things, and am the most skilful of searchers. Let me assist you, I beseech you, Lord Masterton. I will lay you down such a plan of your campaign, that, depend upon it, you shall be as victorious as Condé, even though your enemy were Turenne."

"I am afraid," replied Henry, with a smile, "that you cannot assist me, my dear sir. I have unfortunately lost sight of some dear friends, in a distant part of France; and if I cannot regain the clue at Paris, I shall be obliged to return into Brittany, and set out again from whence I began. In the meantime, will you inform me when and where I can deliver this letter; for it is one of great importance, I am told; and also, I must deliver it alone."

"Alone!" replied Monsieur de St. Maur; "I am not worth stabbing, or I should think you had some design upon my poor life. However, what will you say to dining with me this clear, frosty day? I will despatch my business with Monsieur de Longueville. You get the letter; and a short ride out of the city to St. Maur will not do you any harm.—But let me ask you first, whom is the letter for?"

Henry whispered in his ear the name of Ireton, at which the other started, and showed no small symptoms of surprise. "Will you come?" he repeated, eagerly; "will you come, my Lord Masterton?"

"I would fain you could name some other day," replied the young cavalier; "at present, my mind is but little attuned to society; and I have also some business to transact in the town—the day after to-morrow, perhaps?"

"Nay, I must become your suitor," replied the general; "you *must* come to-day, my young friend—I will receive you alone—you shall name your own hour for dinner, so that you may have time for all affairs; and you shall see no one at my house

without you like it. But that letter is of much importance ; I would fain receive it this day, and I would fain receive it in my own dwelling ; for I do not know what effect it may have either on my mood or my movements."

"If such be the case, of course I cannot refuse," replied Henry. "Between this and two o'clock—though that be somewhat late for your dinner, I am afraid—but between this and two, I doubt not I shall be able to accomplish all I have to do in Paris, and also reach your dwelling. But you must give me the address correctly : remember, I am a stranger here."

"Two of my men shall accompany you," said Monsieur de Vitray ; "it is not very safe to travel in these times without society, though one may have a pass in one's pocket, and a sword by one's side. They, too, will show you the way."

"So let it be, then," said the old officer ; "at two I will expect you ;" and making his way forward to Monsieur de Longueville, he left Henry and his companion to quit the saloon, and seek their horses in the Place de Grève.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE dwelling of Major-General Walter Dixon was by no means difficult to discover, the officers of police in whose custody he had remained for several hours having ascertained his abode with great precision. The style of life which he led in Paris was precisely what might have been expected from his character and circumstances. He lived well, though not splendidly ; but still so much better than most of his countrymen who had been driven abroad by the civil wars, that many a poor cavalier of rank was glad to sit down to the table of the *ci-devant* Round-head. Walter Dixon had indeed never been very vehement in his politics, and he now affected an inclination towards loyalty, which gave the loyalists good hope of rendering him a convert. His object in thus making friends with the English in Paris might be the general one which he invariably kept before his eyes, of providing support of all kinds against future contingencies, and it might be also that he had some design of employing any of the more daring and unscrupulous of his countrymen—many of whom would at that time have sold their lives for a dinner—in forwarding those parts of his purpose against Sir Andrew Fleming which were not particularly smiled upon by the law. In these enterprises, it must be remarked, he never employed his own servants, and the person who performed any dangerous service for him was well rewarded for his exertions,

but had no opportunity of accumulating many such claims upon his employer. In almost all instances, however, Walter Dixon endeavoured to accomplish whatever he undertook with his unassisted arm as far as there was any probability of success, judging the risk to his person at the time as nothing compared with that attendant upon making his views known to any one else.

The house of the worthy Parliamentarian was in the best part of the city, and the servant who attended the summons of the young cavalier was one of those whom he had seen in the boat which had brought him to Calais. His master, however, he replied, had ridden out; and as no information was to be obtained concerning the hour of his return, Henry Masterton was obliged to abandon his farther inquiries for that day.

Returning to the hotel of Monsieur de Vitray, he furnished himself with the letter which had been entrusted to him for General St. Maur, and after waiting some time for a pass to ensure his safe egress and regress through the gates of Paris, he set out on one of Monsieur de Vitray's high-dressed horses, which the worthy Frenchman insisted upon his using, as more easy in its paces than his own uncultivated Breton. Two well-armed servants also accompanied him, together with his page; and proceeding at a quick pace, they were soon out of the dull and narrow streets of the city, and enjoying the blessed aspect of the country.

It was a clear, frosty day, with the sky blue and serene, and the sun shining afar with unusual splendour upon all the sparkling frost-work which begemmed every leaf of grass and encrusted every naked bough. The whole prospect was white and glistening, and there was a vigorous freshness in the air, which seemed to bring the body into tone with the scene, and give it power to enjoy even the cold aspect of the winter. It is true that not a leaf was to be seen upon the trees: all the green garmenture of summer was gone. Every drop of water was covered with a hard, dark coat of ice, and the birds sitting melancholy in the trees, appeared as dull, black, meaningless spots amidst the glittering whiteness of the world. The voice of nature, too, was silent; there was no gay hum of the insect world abroad, and all the music of the birds was reduced to the sweet shrill petitioning song of the familiar robin, as, sitting fearless on a spray, he poured his plaintive ditty on the path. Yet, still there was something in the scene that was cheerful. The glorious sun was shining—the great, bright, mighty light-giver was smiling upon the world; and though power was not given to his beams to melt the icy fetters in which nature lay, he changed them with magic power to gems of every hue, and made the congealed world sparkle with his golden rays.

The young Englishman felt revived by the sight of nature's unencumbered face, and the fresh air gave him new vigour as he rode along. The spring of health seemed to open again in his bosom, and hope, which depends too much upon bodily sensation, rose up with every stronger beat of his own heart. The road which he followed was not particularly beautiful, but at length it turned back towards the Seine which it had quitted, and climbing the brow of a high hill, passed by a stone wall encircling a considerable tract of ground which sloped down towards the river from the summit of the ascent. What was beyond the wall was hardly to be distinguished through the thick trees that bordered the high road, but every now and then a glimpse was caught of smooth lawns, and long fine avenues, and majestic masses of deep wood, looking black and stern even through the hoary covering of the winter.

At length, approaching a massy gate of wrought iron, one of the servants who followed rode up, and informed Lord Masterton that the entrance of the dwelling he sought was before him, and opening the grille, as it was called, they passed into the principal avenue of the park. Exquisite taste had apparently been employed to give perfection to everything which the eye now met; and continual care and attention were evidently busy at all seasons, to keep the whole regular and neat. Not a leaf from the trees was to be seen encumbering the ground. The road was as smooth and even as if it were the height of summer, the grass was close shaven, and as even as velvet, and the different flowering shrubs that stood waiting to burst forth in beauty in the spring, were all carefully protected from the frosty air.

The house itself was not visible at first, but after proceeding for about half a mile down the avenue, Henry Masterton came upon a neat, well-finished dwelling of white stone, perhaps too small for the size of the property, which seemed well deserving of as splendid a château as any in France; but there was an air of comfort and simplicity in the low but elegant house of the old English officer, that made up for the want of higher pretensions. The view was most beautiful; the situation on which it had been placed, half way down the slope of the hill towards the river, commanding the whole windings of the Seine and the rich country through which it flows, with the distant metropolis breaking the line beyond. In the foreground were rich wooded banks, with many a beautiful walk down to the river; while, up the different brakes of the wood, which swept round the lawn in front, might be caught the perspective of long avenues and deep glades, and other lawns beyond.

Round about were a variety of animals of different kinds: three or four peacocks were perched amongst the branches of

some evergreens, enjoying the short glimpse of sunshine, and two light greyhounds came forward with their elastic steps toward the stranger as he alighted at the door.

The sound of his horse's feet had brought out two servants, and it was clear that his host had arrived before him, by the ready and expecting manner with which one of the grooms took his beast; while the other, leading the young cavalier through a large vestibule, the pillars of which were decked with the arms of all ages and nations, conducted him into a small but elegant library. There was nobody there, but the servant said he would inform his master of his lordship's arrival, and closing the door, left Henry to his own thoughts.

The room was filled with books of many kinds, all arranged in great order; but the object which first attracted and then absorbed the whole of Henry Masterton's attention was the solitary picture which occupied the greater part of one side of the room; it was a full-length portrait of a very lovely woman, painted by Antonio Vandyke. Her figure was full of easy grace, but yet there was a certain degree of languor in it that gave the idea of delicate health; and though Henry had first looked at it but as a very beautiful specimen of art, there seemed to grow a deeper interest in the picture as he gazed. The delicate hand leaned upon a marble table, on which were scattered various flowers, some budding, some full-blown, and some withered; and underneath them the painter, with a bold and easy hand, had written the word "*Spes.*" There seemed a vague moral in it; and Henry could not help feeling that there is ever something intrinsically sad in a portrait. What can they be, but records of past hopes and broken affections? and even if the originals still live, they are monuments to years that can never return—to health, to strength, to vigour, to charms, to graces that have fled! But still Henry gazed: there was a soft and living gentleness in those liquid hazel eyes that seemed to touch his heart with solemn and melancholy feelings. They seemed to speak of love and tenderness gone by and swallowed up by the devouring tomb; and, associating with all his own hopes and dreams, the language of those calm, moveless looks seemed to comment on the transitory brevity of all the finest and noblest ties which bind heart to heart, the evanescence of the sweetest feelings that mingle in the bitter cup of life. But no, the portrait stood before him a record of memory and undying affection. "Surely," he thought, "if human hands can preserve for the corporeal eye a living likeness, like that, of a form that has long been dead, the spirit, the eternal spirit may bear into another state the picture of a spirit that it loved, painted deep amidst the memories of the world that it leaves behind. If, in another state, we forget all our actions, and our

feelings here, we should not be the same beings that were here, for identity of existence can but be proved by the mind's own comparison of the past and the present; and if we remember at all, surely we shall remember those we loved. Oh, no! he who has loved such a being as that, and such a spirit as speaks from those eyes, can never forget—no, not in the tomb!”

While he yet gazed and thought, the door opened, and General St. Maur entered. “That picture,” he said, remarking the direction of the young cavalier’s eyes, without any other salutation, “that picture was very like—it is that of my wife—now an angel in heaven. People wonder that, feeling towards her as I did, and feeling towards her still as I do—that is to say, loving her with the same deep, fervid affection which I bore towards her while she was yet on earth—they wonder that I like to have her picture always before my eyes, and say that it must call up melancholy remembrances—and talk a great deal of nonsense of a similar kind. Far from calling up any melancholy remembrances—it calls up sweet and bright ones, and wakens hopes and expectations still brighter. As I sit here, and read, and write, and think, it seems as if the spirit of my departed angel contemplated me making my way forward to the goal where we shall meet again! and as if she were smiling encouragement upon my onward path. So much for that. And now, my young friend, where is Master Ireton’s letter? How fares he?—’Tis a year and a half since I heard of him, and as I then treated the counsel he kindly gave me of his own accord, as badly as if I had asked for it—that is to say, did the direct contrary—I almost feared that I should not have farther news of him.”

“There is the letter, Monsieur de St. Maur,” replied Henry, presenting it. “But I must explain to you how it came to be so long delayed on the road. In London, I accidentally met the writer, of whom I know nothing personally, and finding that I was about to set out for France, he entrusted the packet to me. My first business, and principal duty, led me into Brittany, in search of some who are very dear to me; I found the convent in which I had left them burnt down, and a letter that had been left for me—to direct my farther steps, I presume—destroyed in the flames. I tracked them out, however, to Paris, but as I was just entering the city, I unfortunately got between two parties of the Frondeurs and Mazarinites, and received a wound in my shoulder which has kept me ever since confined a close prisoner to my chamber.”

Monsieur de St. Maur listened while Henry spoke, without opening the letter. “You have been very unfortunate, indeed, my lord, in your first visit to Paris,” he replied; “and I have been unfortunate in not having the pleasure of meeting with you sooner.—Will you permit me?”—and he broke the wax.

His eye fixed eagerly upon the contents, and as he read, a variety of changing expressions passed over his countenance. The letter was somewhat long, and the hand not easily deciphered, so that, for five or ten minutes, Henry Masterton had little occupation but in remarking the alternate light and shade that flitted over the countenance of his companion.

"This is news, indeed, my lord," he said, "and it requires some consideration. For many years I have now been an exile from my native land, and deprived of my rightful property. This letter contains an offer of restoration to all that I possessed, without one condition that could compromise my feelings, or my honour; but it is offered by a sect that I abhor, and by men who, I see plainly, not contented with freeing their country from a grievous yoke, will end by murdering their king. Of all of them, however, Ireton, though perhaps the most ferocious, is the most disinterested. He acts, I feel sure, on principle, and believes, while he stains his hands deep in blood, that he is barely doing his duty. However, the matter requires some thought, for since I last rejected a proposal somewhat similar, many a change has taken place, which renders the offer more acceptable and the obstacles far fewer. But let us to dinner, my good lord, and we will talk over old days—I shall treat you frugally—no sumptuous table is to be found in my house."

As he spoke, the dinner was announced, and the old officer led his guest through a door of communication into the eating-room, which was light and cheerful, and warmed by a blazing fire of beech-wood. The dinner, though simple, was excellently cooked, and excellently served; the wines were fine, and every thing spoke the same careful regularity that the whole house displayed, and yet nothing showed a rigorous or exacting master. The servants seemed to watch his looks with affection, as well as respect, and a cloud never came over his countenance while speaking to any of them.

The dinner passed over, and a dessert of different kinds of nuts and dried fruits was placed upon the table, with some finer wines. There was one thing, however, which Henry had remarked during dinner; namely, that the servants had brought in and carried out the dishes through the door, which opened into the library, neglecting two other doors, which apparently led into the vestibule. At one of these doors, he had more than once heard a noise as if of a child endeavouring to come in, and as the servants were putting the last dishes of the dessert upon the table, one of them seemed to forget the way by which he usually entered, and suddenly opened the one from whence the sounds had proceeded. The moment he did so, with a whine of exquisite delight, a beautiful black spaniel, of King Charles's breed, rushed joyfully into the room. Lord Masterton

expected to see it fly to the chair of the General, but at once it sprang towards himself, leaped into his lap, and to his surprise and joy, he found his own beautiful dog Rupert caressing him, wild with pleasure and affection.

Both Henry and the General started on their feet, and while the young cavalier fixed his wondering eyes upon his companion, as if demanding an explanation, the old officer exclaimed, "It's all over now ! It's all over ! Rupert, you dog, you're a traitor !"

Henry's heart beat quick and fast, and well it might ; for through the open door he saw another beyond, on the farther side of the vestibule, through which a form was advancing towards him that needed no second glance to make his whole frame thrill. "Gracious Heaven !" he exclaimed, starting forward—"Is it possible ? Emily ! beloved !"

Emily only answered by gliding on to meet him, and in another moment he held her to his heart. The servants stood round perhaps in some astonishment, while Monsieur de St. Maur looked on, upon the joy that sparkled in the eyes of the lovers, with no small expression of delight in his own.

"There, there, my good friends !" he said to the attendants at length, "you have had your treat too. The play is over ! Now, Robin, set down that dish here. You, Peter, place a seat for the Lady Emily. We will not lose our dessert because she comes to interrupt us. Some one offer my homage to the Lady Margaret, and tell her that her company will add to our delight. Now, shut the doors—Rupert, down sir ! You are a traitor, and have betrayed the secrets of the garrison—and I cannot help suspecting that fair lady, too, of conniving at the treason."

"Indeed, my dear father, I could not help it," replied Emily ; "Rupert knew that his master was in the house from the first moment his foot crossed the threshold, and he was so anxious to see him, that——"

"That his mistress was scarcely more so—hey ?" demanded the General : "but I forgive you, my sweet child, and share all your joy to the utmost."

Emily threw her arms round the neck of the old officer, and printed a kiss upon his cheek, that made the blood come rushing with violence into that of Henry Masterton ; for though the half of a century must have been some years past with Monsieur de St. Maur, yet he was still both young and handsome enough to cause a pang of jealousy to dart through the heart of the young cavalier, on seeing such an endearment bestowed upon another. He gazed with astonishment—Emily caught his eye, and blushed, saying—"I had forgot !"—but there was so much pure innocence in her blush, and in the smile that accompanied it, that Henry felt there could be no evil in that action

which had called it up. Still, however, it was extraordinary; but Monsieur de St. Maur put an end at once to all farther doubt.

"My Lord Masterton," he said, "it was my intention to have given you a few hours longer to wait, and to have forced you to tell me the object of the search you have more than once mentioned, before I led you to that object itself; but this faithful beast has betrayed the secret too soon. And now I see, by the kiss she gave me but now, this dear girl, if she has not betrayed another secret, has—But here comes Lady Margaret! Before you say a word, fair dame, be witness of what I do. Emily, my beloved, give me your hand—there, Henry Masterton," he added, placing that fair small hand in his, "I give it to you, for the first time that it has ever been rightfully given, and that by a title which no one can deny—the right of her own father! Yes, young gentleman, I am William Lord Langleigh, of whom you may have heard."

"Good God! is it possible?" exclaimed the other; "often, often have I heard of him; but I ever heard that he was drowned in making his escape from England."

"To explain that would require a long story, which must be told hereafter," replied Lord Langleigh, dropping the serious and dignified tone he had assumed, and turning playfully towards Lady Margaret. "Now, my dear cousin, bridle your impatience no longer, but bless him, as I know you have been longing to do—bless him, as he stands there, holding the hand of that dear girl who owes so much to his courage and activity."

"I do bless him!" answered Lady Margaret. "Bless thee, bless thee, my dear son; for nobly and generously hast thou acted, in circumstances of difficulty and danger, when you had to contend against many things; but, above all, with the ardent passions of your own heart. Bless you! I say, bless you! and well, and surely, and confidently did I feel that Heaven would repay, in full measure, every act of self-denial you practised, when self-denial was most hard. But how is it, Henry, how is it, my son, that we have so long expected your return to us in vain?"

"True, true!" said Lord Langleigh; "though they have heard all that you told me this morning, they do not yet know how you happened not to find them as immediately as they fully intended you should. Come, come, my lord, explain all the circumstances; leave no day unaccounted for, or we shall be jealous. Ha, Emily! do you love him well enough to be jealous?"

"Too well, my dear father!" she answered; and Henry proceeded with his tale.

That tale is already well known, and does not at all merit

any review. Nevertheless, though it was told minutely, there were still many questions to be asked; for every trifling circumstance that befel Henry Masterton was of deep interest in the eyes of Emily Langleigh. How he had followed their track so far, was matter of surprise; but how he had missed them at length was easily accounted for, as they had not entered Paris at all, but had turned aside, through some of the cross roads that intersect the country in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and had proceeded to St. Maur without venturing within the walls of the beleaguered capital.

"And now," said Henry Masterton, as he concluded, "let me, too, ask some explanations. Has my dear Emily all along known the existence of her father; for if she has, she has concealed her knowledge with wonderful discretion?"

"Fie, Henry! that sounds very like a reproach," replied Emily; "but I will tell you, nevertheless, that I did not know that my father was in being, till he suddenly appeared at the convent in which you left us at Dinan."

"Then, by what happy miracle, my lord, did you hear of your daughter being in France?" demanded Henry; "for without a miracle I can hardly understand how so fortunate a circumstance came about."

"That will form a part of the history I intend to give you to-morrow," replied Lord Langleigh; "but, in the meantime, I have news for you, my beloved girl, and news which has been brought me by our dear friend here. My old head now shall take counsel by your young one. The English Council of State offer, by Ireton here, under his own hand, to restore to me my honours and estates in England. The attainder, indeed, which struck my name, is already reversed; but they offer me back my beautiful estates of Penford-bourne."

"Of Penford-bourne!" exclaimed Henry Masterton: "then it was from you that the base Lord Ashkirk wrested those rich domains where I and my unhappy brother tarried so long?"

"Even so," answered Lord Langleigh. "Penford-bourne and Langleigh Castle, the old ruin on the height, were mine, till that false knave, partly by betraying what he knew, partly by inventions of his own, made my king and my peers believe that my designs were those of a traitor, when my most zealous intentions were those of a patriot. There have I passed many happy hours; and when I stood there last, Henry Masterton, it was as the second of the very man to whom those lands had come in the course of time, when he drew his sword against your own brother. But, again, I will not enter now upon those histories.—They offer to restore me those estates—Say, Emily, shall I accept them now?—A similar offer I refused before,

in consideration of my wretched friend, Sir Andrew Fleming, to whose wife they had descended—but his death has removed that obstacle.”

“First, tell me why you hesitate, my dear father,” replied Emily.

“Because, my sweet child, the people who offer them back again,” said Lord Langleigh, “have, in my eyes, no power, no right so to act. They are neither my peers, who took those estates from me, my king, who bestowed them on another, nor really and truly the representatives of the nation, whose will is law. Those who offer them back are but a junta of upstarts, amongst whom are some honest and sincere men, some wise and talented ones, some fools, some hypocrites, and many knaves. Such is the Council of State that offers; and what is the House of Commons that must confirm their decrees? anything but the representation of the British people. It is a packed jury, from which, since its misnamed purification by Colonel Pride, all that is honest, honourable, wise, and manly is excluded. It is a congregation of knaves and fools, where the knaves rule and the fools give their consent. Upon the voice of these two bodies must your father’s restoration to his estates be founded. But remember, those estates are large, and though to me, whose habits are formed, and whose life draws near a close, such things are nothing—yourself and your future husband, to whom they must descend, may see with different eyes, and decide from different feelings.”

Emily coloured slightly, then turned her eyes to those of Henry Masterton, by whose side she sat, and at once reading her answer there, she replied, “Do not accept them, my dear father!—Do not accept them!”

“Well, then,” replied Lord Langleigh, without farther thought, “that matter is settled. We shall have fully enough for happiness, my children—what need we more?”

“Nothing, nothing!” replied Henry Masterton, boldly, “nothing!”

“Nothing, indeed!” echoed Emily, as she fixed her eyes upon him.

“The light is waning,” said Lord Langleigh, as he looked from the window; “but, my dear Henry, I do not intend to let you ever separate from us again. Here must be your home.”

“I have with me two servants of our good friend, Monsieur de Vitray,” replied the young cavalier, doubtingly, but with willingness to comply sparkling from his eyes.

“So much the better,” rejoined the Earl; “send them back with your excuses, and they will keep each other company on the road. Bid them tell good De Vitray that you are fully of

opinion that France is the most exquisite land in the world, but that you love the country better than the town, and I will warrant that he takes all in good part.

Henry was in no mood to create objections; the Earl's plan was adopted, the young cavalier stayed, and in the society of all that made life dear to him, passed one of the brightest evenings of his life.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

I MUST now, for a very brief space, change the scene, and lead the reader into the interior of a house, at which he only stopped for a moment in the morning, to inquire for Walter Dixon.

It was about nine o'clock on the night of the same day, when, at a table in a small but elegantly furnished room, sat Major-General Dixon, while a servant, standing in silence behind his chair, watched attentively all his movements, to be able, without a word, to change his plate, to bring that dish or this, to pour him wine, or to remove one service and carry in another, still leaving uninterrupted the train of thought in which his master was indulging.

Although deeply engaged in reflection, the sage and considerate General did not neglect, in the indulgence of his mental faculties, to refresh his bodily powers, and of about ten dishes that at one time or other covered the table during his evening meal, he ate a portion of each, small indeed, but sufficient on the whole both to sate his appetite and to gratify his palate.

Nor was wine wanting; of the lighter sorts which accompanied the more solid food, he drank repeatedly, and at length, when his supper was concluded by the dessert, three bottles of ancient vintages, which had seen the sun rise over the rich and flavour-giving Rhone, were set before him.

The servant piled more wood upon the fire, trimmed the tapers, and retiring, closed the door. Walter Dixon filled his glass, stretched out his feet, and was happy. "By this time," he said to himself, "my messenger is at Calais. Then a fair wind and good speed, and he may reach London the day after tomorrow by nightfall. Then again, on Monday the Council will meet, and they dare not now refuse me the estates—their last excuse is gone. Let me see!—I must sell that detached piece that comes down by the Stoure, to pay off the unmortgaged debts. It will surely fetch twenty thousand pounds, and then I shall have five thousand in hand. Well, and let Manuel

take the mortgaged land—I would a thousand times sooner part with every farthing that my father wrung from the fists of the dull country knights, than lose one acre of Penford-bourne!”

Such was the train of his thoughts, when they were interrupted by the opening of the door to give entrance to the same servant who had waited upon him during supper. Walter Dixon turned angrily towards him, exclaiming, “What now?”

“Master Manuel, sir, from London,” replied the man, “craves to speak with your honour, if it will not disturb you.”

“Hell sink him to the centre!” muttered Walter Dixon to himself; but then immediately added aloud, in a sweet, gay voice, “What, Master Manuel!—where is he?—show him in instantly. Bring other glasses—set a chair by the fire—Welcome, welcome, my dear friend!” he continued, as the servant introduced the Jewish merchant, with whom we have already seen both Walter Dixon and Ireton consorting in London. “Welcome, welcome to Paris! Have you supped, Master Manuel? Well, then, you never refuse your share of a bottle, if it be of the best. Here, taste this Burgundy—To your health and prosperity, Master Manuel; and now, what brings you to the strange capital of this strange land?”

“Oh, you know, my good General,” replied the other, as the servant retired and again closed the door, “all lands are the same to me; born in Portugal, educated in England, trading in France and Germany, and securing my money in Holland, all countries are mine alike. But between you and me, I have come to Paris upon some loans that the great men here want to raise amongst the remnant of Israel.—Excellent good wine this, Master Dixon!—I think of carrying over some fine wines for my lord the General. But how go your own affairs? Any hope of the money for the bond? The interest is running high.”

“Any hope, good Manuel?” answered Walter Dixon, with a smile of triumph; “the business is done—the money is as good as in your pocket, the estates are as good as in my hand.”

“Ha! good news, indeed!” cried the merchant, his face brightening at the name of money; “good news, indeed. But how is all this, I pray you, good Master Dixon? You are a cunning man—you are a cunning man, indeed. How have you contrived to remove all difficulties? Ha?”

“Accident—mere accident has done it all,” replied the other, who did not choose to inform his companion frankly of the share he himself had in the death of the Benedictine. “This Sir Andrew Fleming, on whose account you heard Ireton refuse me the estates—for though he puts it on the Council, he is at

the bottom of the affair,—well, this Sir Andrew Fleming was killed the day before yesterday in a chance affray with a mad young English lord, who had run away with his wife. Without loss of time, I got the legal proofs of his death, and sent them off to the Council with a humble petition and remonstrance, much like those with which they treat the fool parliament. But what makes thee look so dull, man? Take another glass, good Manuel. Why shakest thou thy head? Ha?”

“Because I fear it will not do,” answered the other—“because I fear it will not do.”

“But, I tell thee it must do!” answered Walter Dixon, striking his hand upon the table with anger at the very thought of failure,—“But I tell thee it must do—they cannot, they dare not refuse me! There is now no objection; they have pledged themselves by all that is sacred; and besides,” he added, the same triumphant smile again illumining his features, “besides, I do not alone claim the estates from their bounty—I claim them by law, man!—I claim them by law! as next of kin to the Lady Eleanor Fleming, the heiress of those estates. Nay, shake not your head—the Lady Eleanor sleeps sound too—the sod is upon her head as well as his;—I say again, shake not your head, Manuel—all is provided for, I tell thee; though I know thy difficult and doubting mind of old. You will say, that Sir Andrew Fleming claimed the estates after her, and that, if he survived but for a minute, they went to his heirs, not hers. But I tell thee—No! man. They were but his for life, and then returned to the general heirs of her and of her father. I am the only one, and therefore I set both Parliament and Council at defiance.”

“But listen, my good friend, listen,” said Manuel; “I have news to tell you of various kinds, and somewhat that concerns yourself, Master Dixon, and which, unfortunately, concerns me, too. Well, there was money wanting in London as well as here in Paris, and so of course I was called upon, and when I assured their honourable worships that no money could be gained without something was offered as security, it was proposed, amongst other things, to forfeit or sequester the estates of all malignants, and sell them at the highest value.”

“The villains did not—surely they did not proceed on such a scheme,” exclaimed Walter Dixon, his eager eyes flashing fire as he spoke.

“No, no, no! that would never do,” replied Manuel, “for the insecurity of such a purchase would have made them all go at a tenth of the price. However, a great many estates were named while the matter was being discussed, and amongst the rest Penford-bourne with the Manor of West Burington and the Stoure side flats thereunto attached. Well, and your own letters

and memorials were brought forward to show that the Lady Eleanor Fleming was a malignant herself, and a fautor of rebellion and malignancy against the Parliament; and that her husband being, like herself, a malignant and papist, was also a priest of Baal, and a sworn servant of the beast!—Ha, ha, ha! a sworn servant of the beast!—So the words went, I think;” and the worthy Hebrew seemed to ponder with internal satisfaction upon the sweet and charitable epithets which the Christians applied to each other. “Well,” he continued, filling himself, unbidden, another bumper of Burgundy — “Well, when that question was mooted, up got Master Ireton, and, to do him but justice, he spoke like a man. He said that if those estates were forfeited at all, it behoved the Council of State to remember that they had already been promised, in such case, to a worthy and God-fearing man (meaning you), who was heir and next of kin to the papistical malignants who at present held them. But at the same time he begged the Council to consider whether they could be forfeited on account of the present possessors, inasmuch as they the present possessors had, as he conceived it, no right or title whatever to the estates, themselves: and then he went on to show, that those estates had been taken by the man Charles Stuart from a more godly and righteous man than himself, Lord Langleigh, and bestowed, without either law or reason, on an obdurate and flintlike papist, the Lord Ashkirk. Now, said he, it has been proved that these estates were then wrested from the Lord Langleigh, because he sought, even at the first hour, to do that which many holy men have at length accomplished in the seventh hour; and the Lords have within the last six months reversed the attainder of the Lord Langleigh. Therefore, if he were not guilty, the law could not take the estates from an innocent man; and notwithstanding anything that a tyrant might do in giving those estates to another, the real right of the property was still in him who had originally possessed them. And right well and eloquently he spoke thereon for the matter of two hours or thereabouts.”

“And he might full as well have saved his breath,” interrupted Walter Dixon; “the Lord Langleigh has been dead these eighteen years, and in lieu of his lands and tenements on *terra firma*, has a freehold of many a fair acre of the British Channel. Pshaw! what boots it reasoning of the dead?”

“But hear, Master Dixon! hear, yet awhile!” replied the merchant: “the Council said as you say, and there was many a man to poo! and to pshaw! like yourself: but Master Ireton went on to say, that not far from Paris lived a man called the General St. Maur, and that since, of latter times, many men

had been coming and going between France and England, this General St. Maur had been seen of various worthy men, who knew the Lord Langleigh in former days, and who declared these two persons, as they seemed, to be one and the same."

"Hold! hold! hold!" cried Walter Dixon, rising up, and pacing the chamber once or twice; "I have seen this St. Maur in Paris this very morning—and I have seen the Lord Langleigh, too, in former days—but I saw him only once; and it is long since," and he paused, meditating, as if endeavouring to recal the appearance of the person of whom he spoke—"It may be!" he said, at length, "it may be! But have they any proof? Are they sure themselves? How did they decide?"

"Master Ireton seemed fully sure of what he said," replied the merchant; "and as to the Council, they determined at once, that touching those estates, if the Lord Langleigh came forward and claimed them, it would but be an act of just restitution to give them back again to him, with such other honours and profitable employments as his former zeal and sufferings in the good cause well merited."

"Ha! they did? they did?" exclaimed the other, again pacing the chamber, but with more rapid and less steady steps; "they did? Well, then, Master Manuel," he continued, recovering himself, and filling his glass, calmly, "here, I drink to your good health, and may you never come to need the sum you are like to lose by your humble servant, Walter Dixon!"

"You are joking, Master Dixon, you are joking"—replied the other, with a slight degree of alarm touching the carelessness he sought to assume; "you are joking, I know."

"Faith, you are mistaken, good Jew!" answered the Parliamentarian; "faith, you are mistaken: the matter is past a joke, both with you and me. Hark thee, Mannel!" he continued, advancing fiercely towards the other, as he saw him about to speak; "say not a word, or you will drive me mad. Villain! you could have prevented this! If you had but threatened to withhold your purse from the gripe of Ireton and the rest, they had as soon dared wrest from your friend—your debtor, if you will—the long-promised reward of his services, as—as—But be it on your own head. Small is your loss in comparison of mine; and it will teach you, in future, to be more free of your services, when your word can avert so black a deceit."

"On my life—on my honour, Master Dixon, it was not my fault," replied the merchant: "I know those men better than you do, far. All the difficulties Ireton and Cromwell raised concerning money were but that they might have their own way. Think you that Cromwell ever wants money? No, no!

Where he gets it, how he manages his resources, I know not; but neither he nor Ireton are in my debt a stiver—as I live—upon my honour!”

“Honour!” repeated Walter Dixon, with a bitter sneer, that made the blood rush up even into the sallow cheek of the merchant.

“Come, come, Master Dixon,” he exclaimed, “if you use me thus, I must speak a different language. You know that while there was the least chance of your bringing your plans to bear, I never pressed you for the payment of the bond; but now I must tell you, since all that is over, it must now be paid—fifteen thousand pounds, and interest since last January—I want the money—I cannot do without it! I can use it better!”

“Indeed!” answered the other, gazing on him with a smile full of contempt; “indeed! And now hear me, Master Manuel—As you have heard my interests thwarted without supporting them, and come to dash all my hopes without raising new ones, I have to tell you, there is but one way I can pay you—it is a speedy one; but one you may not like.”

“How? how?” demanded the Jew.

Walter Dixon laid his finger on the hilt of his sword, saying, calmly, “With steel, Master Manuel! with steel!”

“For that I am always prepared, when I walk the streets at night,” answered the merchant, drawing a pistol partly from his bosom: “But I know you jest, General Dixon. You have many other ways of paying me, as you well know, and I must insist on immediate payment, as I need the cash.”

“And how do you intend to enforce your mighty demand?” asked the Parliamentary; “you forget, my good friend, that here we stand in Paris, in a foreign land, that will no more take cognizance of your claim, than of the cabala of your forefathers.”

“’Tis you forget, Master Dixon,” answered the other, “in that simple piece of paper, your bond, is inserted, not only the humble name of Hezekiah Manuel, but that of François du Four, a French citizen, residing in Paris, and my partner. So that, if you drove us to sue you, which sure I am so honourable a gentleman will not, we can recover even here.”

“You are prepared, I see, for all events,” answered Walter Dixon, with another bitter smile; “and therefore, doubtless, you will not be surprised when I tell you, that of the fifteen thousand pounds which you demand, I have in that drawer the sum of one hundred louis, which is all that I possess on earth. Now, Master Manuel?” and he laid his hand hard upon his shoulder, and gazed him full in the face.

“You jest, sir! you jest!” exclaimed the merchant, throwing off his hand, and starting up with a look of dismay.—

"But the silver plate you showed me only the day before you set off——"

"Is sold, every ounce!" answered the Parliamentary, calmly.

"And the house in Gracechurch-street, and the lands near Ashford?" added the other, in a more doubtful tone.

"Mortgaged to the last penny," replied the other.

"God of Abraham!" cried the other, in a tone of self-abasement indescribable, "I have been cheated by a Christian! But surely, surely, Master Dixon——"

"Surely and certainly, it is as I tell you," interrupted the other; "and therefore, without you can point out some way, in which a desperate man may raise money, you are as far from the payment you require as you are from Abraham's bosom."

"I will not believe that it is all sold!" cried the other, suddenly; "you had no time, Master Dixon; I examined well the rolls. It cannot be mortgaged, nor can the silver plate be sold."

"I will soon convince you," replied the other; and proceeding to a cabinet, he took from one of the drawers two slips of paper, the one being an account of various articles of plate, sold to John Wilson, William Stuart, and Henry Toogood, and various others of the goldsmiths' company, and the other a receipt for title-deeds, given up conditionally to a mortgage.

The merchant held them in his hand a moment, glaring upon Walter Dixon with no very charitable feeling. He then returned them, saying, bitterly—"Man, you have undone me! Your estates will not sell now, in these troublous times, for half the amount to which you mortgaged them. Everything has fallen in value, and is falling still. I have made bad speculations. A bill comes due next month for twenty thousand pounds, and I have not seven prepared. Fool that I was, to take money on any man's bond, without better security!"

"And still greater fool," interrupted Walter Dixon, fiercely, "to hear the very estates on which you knew your creditor depended, given away to another without interposing a word."

"Hold your recriminations, Master Dixon," replied the other; "the truth is, I thought I might make a good speculation there too; and perhaps I might yet, but that would be long in bringing forth, and the present moment is pressing. What can be done?—Hark ye!—I bear the news of the Council's determination to this St. Maur, or, as it may be, Lord Langleigh. Can we not burn the letters, and declare that he denies the name? We might even produce a letter to that effect! What say you?"

"That your scheme is as poor a one as ever a desperate man

was driven to, who had no wit to form a better," answered the other. "But, nevertheless, you put me on the right track. Why should not this St. Maur die like other men?"

The merchant started; for, though probably as great a villain as the other, he was a villain in his own way, and had not stretched his contemplations beyond a little forgery. Walter Dixon remarked the look of alarm with which his companion heard a proposition, the deduction from which was evident enough; and again laying his hand upon his arm, he said, "Manuel, my friend, this is too great a matter for thee—but get thee gone to thy bed—sleep sound, and feel sure that I will have the estates, and thou shalt have the gold. I am not advanced thus far, to be turned back by a phantom."

"But, Master Dixon—but my good friend," cried the other, in some trepidation, "but—but——"

"What," exclaimed the other, "art *thou* remorseful!—Was there ever yet a Jew who cared how the gold was come by, so that it flowed into his coffers? Why, Manuel, hast thou lost thy senses? Have you forgot what gold is? Sit you down and let us finish our Burgundy, and then get thee home and say no word to any one of what has passed—but smooth thy beard, and declare that Master Dixon is an honest gentleman, and wonderfully fertile of resources. The gold you shall have—never trouble your head how I come by it."

"It is not that, good Master Dixon; it is not that," replied the Jew. "Beyond all doubt the gold you get will all be won as becomes you—but how am I to tell that when once you have quitted Paris you will ever return?"

"Is that it? Fool! have I not told you that a hundred louis is my whole wealth?" demanded the other. "Am I a man to eke out a hundred louis to the last farthing in a foreign land? Am I a man to creep out my life a poor debtor living on the bounties of others? Am I a man to live upon coarse food, and drink plain water, and sigh in rags for bright eyes that will not look upon me?—Out, man! Think you that it is for your beggarly pounds that I propose to play a high stake with the certainty of winning in this world, and to take my chance of another. No, no, no! I have higher things in view than that. So get thee home to bed—and be at rest. Thy gold is all thou hast to heed; and thy gold thou shalt have."

Thus saying, Walter Dixon led the merchant to the door of the room, and bade him adieu. "Yes, thy gold thou shalt have!" he added, as he turned into his own chamber again. "But whatever gold thou carriest with thee from Paris, thou shalt bear no farther than Abbeville; for I hear that robbers are rife between that place and Calais, and it were a good jest in London to pay thee with thine own money. Here, Stilling-

ham!" he continued, calling his servant, "seek me out by dawn of to-morrow those two fellows, Daintree and Wighton, with whom I spoke three days ago, and bring them hither to breakfast."

The man bowed, and Walter Dixon began again to pace his chamber thoughtfully, but ever and anon he stopped by the table, replenished his glass, drank off the wine, and then renewed his walk.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AGAIN a change of scene! It was a small chamber, on the fourth story, in the Impasse de la Boule d'Or at Paris, that, about half-past eleven o'clock, on the same evening of which we have just been speaking, contained a being, human in nature, but degraded below the brute, by the wild indulgence of all those passions which seem the fettering links that chain the intelligent soul to its companion of gross flesh. It was a sad and painful scene: the room had the dim, ill-lighted look of poverty; and there was the meagre scantiness in all the furniture it contained—the bare and penurious catering for absolute necessities, and nothing more—which spoke the hired dwelling of wretchedness. A table of plain deal, marked and mottled with many a dull and sickly stain, stood in the midst; and three poor chairs—the shattered frame of one of which promised but little rest to the weary—stood round; while two beds, thrust into close alcoves, served apparently the purposes of cupboards during the day, as well as fulfilled their more ostensible object at night, being now loaded with plates and dishes, swords, cloaks, and boots, which were cast indiscriminately upon them after having been used, with little attention to cleanliness.

One of the chairs I have described, was oppressed by the form of a tall, powerful man, with strongly marked features, which had acquired, by many a painful and degrading scene, a look of anxious watchfulness, blended strangely with an affectation of easy swagger. Besides this, in every line might be seen the traces of low and deep debauchery, that most retributive of vices, which not only mulcts the heart of every good feeling, but brands upon the brow and cheek the burning contract which binds its victim its own for ever. The dress of this unhappy man had once been gay and rich; it was now soiled, and somewhat ragged; but it had withal that air of faded finery, which brings into more painful and immediate contrast the present and the past, than any other shape assumed by that inevitable destiny of all earthly things, *decay*. On the table before him

was a bottle; and, though he was alone, two glasses; and, if one might judge from his countenance, he had been drinking long, for there was upon it a degree of meditative absence of mind, a kind of unreasoning thoughtfulness, (if one may use such seeming contradictions,) which only can be obtained by a state of semi-inebriation. His eye had in it a sort of broad, dull glare, as it fixed upon vacancy, which spoke the dull and misty state of mind where all objects are magnified, but none of them distinct; and, while he remained, as he imagined, deeply buried in abstruse and curious thought, he every now and then instinctively raised the bottle, and seemed to pour something forth into the glass, though in truth the spirits it had once contained had been exhausted long before. Sometimes he would even raise the empty glass to his lips, and then set it down again, with an exclamation of surprise and anger; or else, with a murmur about the *brand wine* being very bad, as if he were making an excuse to some one else, for something, he did not well know what.

At length, after he had sat some time alone, a heavy step sounded upon the stairs; and, starting up with the sort of nervous apprehension which drunkards entertain of being detected, he hastened to remove the vacant tenement of the departed spirit from the table, together with the goblet, murmuring to himself, "Who can it be? It cannot be Wighton yet! Curse the bottle!" and in his haste he let both bottle and glass fall and dash themselves to pieces on the floor.

Before he could apply any remedy, a loud knock at his chamber door demanded his attention; and seating himself once more firmly in his chair, and fixing his eyes with a speculative look upon airy nothing, he bade the visitor come in, with the tone of indifferent abstraction used amongst a particular class of cavaliers at that period.

The person who entered at his bidding was wrapped closely in his cloak; but the moment that was laid aside, the first occupant of the chamber roused himself with a look of extraordinary pleasure, exclaiming, "Ha, Master Stillingham, I am right glad to see thee. By the Lord, I am, though, to say the truth,—to say the truth,—that last cup,—that last cup, sir, has made me rather hazy here," and he laid his finger on his brow. "I am not drunk; you understand me? No, d—— me, not drunk, only, you see, a little cloudy, like a dull morning, you know, Master Stillingham, which always turns out a fine day, you know. But what news of the worshipful General? How is Master Dixon, hey?"

"Come, come, Daintree," replied Walter Dixon's servant, for such was the visitor, "you must find a way to clear your skull of the strong waters. I come to you and Wighton from

the General, about business which must be talked of seriously. So clear your brains as you know how."

"That do I, that do I!" replied the other, "but prithee, Master Stillingham, prithee! pour thou the water, while I hold the head, for good faith! my fingers are slippery to-night, and I would rather neither break my skull nor the pitcher."

Stillingham, who seemed quite acquainted with the other's mode of proceeding, acceded at once; and while Daintree held his head over a basin, and threw back his collar to the shoulders, he poured a large pitcher of cold water over his head and neck with a sudden violence, which made the other sob like an infant. A moment or two after, however, he raised his dripping head, and wiping it with a napkin, which was none of the cleanest, declared himself quite sobered.

"Sit still awhile," replied Stillingham, "and we shall see, Master Daintree. Where is Captain Wighton? I thought to have found him here by this hour."

"No, no," replied the other, who, though by no means quite free from the effects of what he had drunk, had now, at all events, recovered a much greater command of his faculties. "No, no, he is at the Hôtel de Ville, seeing what can be picked up amongst the Frondeurs. There is a great meeting there, and folks go masked. But what need of Wighton?" he added, with a toss of the head. "Wighton, I suppose, cannot serve you better than I can."

"Come, come; no jealousy, Master Daintree," replied the other. "Wighton cannot serve me without you, nor can you serve me without Wighton, though, of course, we have the greater trust in you. But though you shall be the man of action, I promise you, we must still have some one to keep watch and hold the horses. However, remember one thing. Whatever I say to you, when you come to speak with the General, seem as ignorant of the whole business as the dead, for you know well enough he chooses to settle all these affairs himself, and does not wish it to be thought that I know anything about them."

"Oh, never fear—never fear! I know him of old," answered Daintree. "I'll not peach, if you take care that Wighton is not set over the head of a better man than himself, as he was in that business about——"

"Pshaw, man! never fear!" answered the servant, "that was a business of nothing in comparison with this; and here you shall be the man of action, while Wighton holds the horses, I tell you. So you may judge which is the most honourable. But hark!"

As he spoke, there was a quick footfall upon the stairs, as of some person taking three or four steps at once, and the next

moment the door flew open, and in rushed a man, who will be best described by recalling to the reader's mind a certain respectable person, who was found between Calais and Abbeville, engaged with Daintree in lightening the pockets of a traveller of the only earthly load which was never yet found burthensome. On the present occasion he noticed no one in the room, but closing the door quickly after him, applied his ear to the key-hole, apparently to hear if any one followed on his track. All was silent in the chamber as in the house of death; but voices were heard shouting in the street, though the words of their vociferations could not be distinguished at that height. In a moment, however, they passed by, and Wighton, raising himself from his stooping position, cast his hat and cloak upon the bed, and welcomed General Dixon's servant as a dear friend.

"By Minos, judge of hell!" he exclaimed, in the tone of an ancient Pistol, "the rogues had nearly clutched me. I merely sought to carry a gentleman's hat for him, with a weighty diamond loop and button, when his villanous lackeys resented the very offer, before he had time to let go his hold of his hat. They had nearly killed me amongst them. One aimed a blow at me with a torch, another poked at me with a tuck, and another struck at me with a dagger; but faith I was invulnerable, and armed with heels which soon bade them defiance. But I am as thirsty as Tantalus. Hie thee, Daintree, and get us all a stoup of liquor from the Duke of Beaufort's Head.—What! thou wouldst say the money lacketh. There! there! there is a broad piece, which a good woman, a butcher's wife, paid for coming to see the show, and crying God bless the good Duke and the Parliament!"

The prospect of drinking was not to be resisted by the worthy personage to whom this was addressed; and though he had a sort of jealous suspicion of both his companions that made him unwilling to leave them alone together, he contented himself with whispering to Stillingham not to tell Wighton too much, and then sallied forth in quest of the dearly-beloved beverage.

The moment he was gone, however, Stillingham started up, and, with a very different air from that which he had assumed towards the other, addressed the bully who remained alone with him.

"Hark ye, Wighton," he cried, "here is a good hit before us, if you will take a part. Give me all your ears, for I must have my tale over before that drunken fool returns."

"What now? what now, Master Stillingham?" cried the other; "we are neither of us men to refuse a good hit, for on my honour we have been something very like starving for the last three days."

"Well, listen then! listen! and do not interrupt me," answered the other; "I have news for you—Dixon is ruined,—I have overheard the whole story to-night as he talked with a Jew villain, called Manuel, you must have heard of in London. Lord Langleigh has come to life again, and the estates on which he, Dixon, has always counted, are as far from him as ever."

"But who, in Satan's name, is Lord Langleigh?" demanded Wighton. "I never heard of him before."

"It matters not, it matters not," answered Stillingham, impatiently; "on the belief that he was dead, Dixon counted on large estates—spent his all—bound himself to usurers—and he proves to be living near Paris, and without he die within three days the estates are lost for ever. Even if he do, I am sure that they are lost still; but Dixon, who never despairs, is resolved to risk all. Now at this point I give him up, and, if you like to help me, we shall have the pickings of all that is left. That is not much, to be sure, for a hundred louis is all the gold; but there are jewels, and rings, and buttons, worth five hundred more."

"But how, but how—" demanded the other, beginning to rouse himself at such a prospect, "how is all this to be got?"

"Why, listen," replied the other. "I am sent to bid you and Daintree to breakfast with him to-morrow. You will be called upon to help in furnishing this Lord Langleigh with a passport for heaven. Let Daintree be the man of action, as I shall commend him to the General. He is good at the crossbow, you know, and though I am supposed to be profoundly ignorant of all, I can so place my words as to make them tell without seeming to know anything. One will be chosen to keep watch, in whatever way they determine to attempt the little affair; and you must be he. You must then find some one hastily to convey a billet to Lord Langleigh, warning him of his danger, and signed with both our names to make pardon sure, if we be caught before we have completed our business. Wait upon the watch, however, till you see how the affair ends; for if Walter Dixon accomplishes his purpose in spite of our efforts, we must find other means to rid ourselves of him. Nay, nay, do not start! You know him but little, if you think that he and you could live many days upon the same earth after we have betrayed him."

"Hark, there is Daintree!" cried the other; "did you not hear a door below bang hard?"

They both listened, but no farther sound made itself audible, and after a time, the other proceeded,—“No, no! you must wait, whatever betide, till you can bring me sure tidings that Dixon is either seized or killed, for he may very likely make a sort of quarrel of it, and trust to his skill of fence. But, however, I

would not for my life's worth, move a jewel or a louis from its place till I know that he was safely bestowed somehow."

"But suppose they seize me also," rejoined Wighton; "what comes of it then?"

"Nonsense," replied the other; "do not let them seize you! You will be upon the watch, and of course well prepared. And besides, if either you or I were seized, we are sure of getting clear, by sending the billet with the tidings. Pshaw! such a deed as that, in this day, clears a man of all the little sins that ever went before it. But, at all events, keep a good watch: the moment you can be sure that Dixon is either dead or taken, gallop off to me, and we clear the cabinet of all the trinkets that now encumber it. But hark, again! there is Daintree at last. Mind, on your life, to-morrow at your breakfast, seem to be as ignorant as a fortnight lamb, of all that is to be talked about."

"I will, I will!" answered the other; "but before we set out, at eight of the clock, meet me under the arcade of the Place Royale, and we may speak more. Now clear your countenance, for here comes our sot."

As he spoke, the step of Daintree was heard upon the stairs, with a sort of heavy, yet unsettled sound, which seemed to give notice that his command over his limbs had not been at all increased by his visit to the cabaret, where probably he had added one or two draughts, on the strength of Wighton's broad piece, to those he had previously quaffed.

"The sot!" muttered his companion to himself, as he listened: "the sot! one cannot trust him with a crown for five minutes. Yet, on my honour, I can hardly take it on my conscience to leave him in the clutches of the law, to hang dangling like a great scarecrow on a tall gallows at the Grève."

"Conscience!" echoed Stillingham, with a sneer; "what knave parson first taught you to think about conscience, Master Wighton? See you not, that all things die and rot? and so will you, and so shall I; and what will conscience serve you in the earth? Make sure of this world, Master Wighton, for you cannot be sure of another."

"If there be no other world," answered Wighton, with a doubtful gaze upon vacancy—"if there be no other world, all I can say is, it is the strangest fancy man ever took in his head; and what put it there may well be a marvel. I'll tell you what, Master Stillingham, it often strikes me that we, who act as if there were no other world, shall be desperately ill off, if there be. However, it is all too late to think about that now. I am too far in to go back, and so now, have on with you!"

With that sad and false conclusion, which the arch enemy so often furnishes to the sinner for the ultimate condemnation of

his soul, Wighton rose to open the door for his companion, who had been making sundry vain efforts to hit the latch. No sooner was it thrown wide than he entered, bearing in a flagon of red wine, with an unsteady and limber step. He was now, however, in the state of wisdom incident to one stage of drunkenness, and convinced that he was as sober as a judge. He threw down the change he had brought with him before Wighton; and after asking Stillingham to drink, raised the tankard to his own lips, without remarking whether the other accepted or declined the invitation.

"How's this, Master Daintree?" cried Wighton, in a surly tone, when he had counted the silver. "How's this? four livres for a quart of Burgundy! What hast thou done with the rest of the change?"

"Done with the change, base Roundhead!" hiccupped Daintree, setting down the flagon, his deep draught of the contents having carried him from the stage of wisdom to that of pugnacity. "Done with the change, base Roundhead! Darest thou, for thy pitiful life, say that I have filched thy change? There lies thy change, and here's the Burgundy," and he drank again; "and if thou say'st that I have done thee wrong, thou liest to thy beard and thy mustachoes."

"I say you are a drunken sot, and would steal the king's crown for liquor," replied his companion, nothing daunted by the grasp the other laid upon his sword. The word drunken, however, was all that reached the ears of Daintree, who was every moment feeling more deeply the potent effects of his manifold draughts. "Drunk!" he shouted. "Drunk, cullion, thou liest! Have at thee, ho!" and, drawing his tuck, he made a vague lunge at his companion, who put it by with ease, and with a slight push laid him prostrate on the floor. Many a sprawling effort to rise the fallen ruffian made, and many a half-intelligible phrase he uttered, till at length, in one of the intervals, sleep and drunkenness overpowered him quite, and deep snorings took the place of all.

Wighton, raising him from the floor in his nervous arms, cast him upon one of the beds, a dead, insensible weight; and after looking at him for a moment with a glance of mingled anger and contempt, he said, "It's as well for such a thing to die as live—give him a flagon of strong waters half-an-hour before, and he'll know nothing of the hanging." And true to the vanity of human nature, he sat down with Stillingham to lay out some of the basest schemes that ever two villains designed, thinking himself as superior a being to the drunkard on the bed, as the lion to the sow.

"Think you he will be sober enough to do his part to-morrow?" demanded Stillingham. "I knew him long before I met

with you here, Master Wighton, and ever saw he was a drunken hound ; but I never beheld him so besotted till to-night."

"Never fear him ! never fear him !" answered Wighton. "He is seldom better when he lays down to sleep—that is, if he have money to buy either wine or aqua vitæ. But pledge me, Master Stillingham, and then let us settle all to-night, and have nothing before us but action to-morrow."

What wine Daintree had left in the tankard was soon discussed by the other two, and they proceeded to fill up all the minute particulars of the plan, the sketch of which Stillingham had before given to his companion. They then separated for the night, and the servant returning home, prepared to act the unconscious and ignorant domestic towards his wily and daring master, who, with all his cunning and decision, was outwitted and betrayed by the low, quiet art of the despicable insect, that thus lay like an asp in the lair of the tiger.

CHAPTER XL.

HAPPINESS is the best of all panaceas, and no nostrum that ever was vended—even granting full faith to the description of the very charlatan who sells it—possesses half the curative effects of happiness. Yet, unfortunately, it is so rare in this globe—the plant that bears it is so seldom found—and the quantity produced so small, that it is not often met with at all ; and still more seldom, if ever, is to be procured unadulterated. Oh, how many wounds might be healed ! how many diseases of the heart and the brain, which baffle the leech's art, might be cured with ease, if that thin fine essence could be obtained in time ! It may be thought I speak figuratively, and would allude to diseases of the mind ; but, good faith, I speak of the body also, and mean that many an ailment, and many an injury of our corporeal frame, would yield readily to happiness, when no other remedy would affect them. Had Adam continued in the garden of Eden, where all was happiness, how long would he have lived ? Beyond doubt, to all eternity ! but curiosity, that serpent, stung him. Though happiness was within his grasp, he chose the fruit of another tree to heal his wound, lost Paradise, and died.

The effect of happiness on the wounded and weakened frame of Henry Masterton was almost miraculous, and resting in the same dwelling with his Emily, he nearly forgot that he had been ill. The night passed in sweet, sweet repose ; not that death-like sleep that steepes the whole soul in forgetfulness, but that

gentle light slumber which leaves the happy heart awake to fill the void of night with glorious dreams—that sleep which does not smother all our sensations, as if a heavy mountain was piled upon our breast, but that soft, elastic repose which lies upon the bosom like an eider-down quilt, warm, soft, and lighter than a summer cloud.

From such slumber he woke again to happiness, and to the society of all that was dear to him. It is true that as he stood and dressed himself, the memory of his brother's recent fate came in to sadden, and to chasten his brighter thoughts. But when he reflected and knew that, had that brother chosen the path of virtue and of honour, joy such as he then felt might have been his fate also,—though the reflection was not without its bitter, still there was the silent, involuntary, unconscious comparison between the results of good and evil; while, influencing, unseen, every feeling and every thought, he had the satisfaction, too, in his heart of having taken the better part, and in the review of his own fate, and that of the gone, there was a support and a consolation, and a promise and a reward. He did not triumph—no, not for a moment. Such was not the feeling that animated his bosom, but he felt that he had himself been happy in virtue, and that circumstances, in spite of all their first aspect, had worked out virtue's recompence; but he felt also, that even had they continued adverse, he would still have had an internal strength which they could not affect. While such were his reflections on himself and on his own conduct, it was but natural that his mind should turn to that of the other persons who, playing a part in the same scene as himself, had played it ill; and he saw that, even while bitter remorse and painful self-upbraidings must have mingled with every moment of their enjoyment, sorrow had followed vice, and the end of all had been evil. As he thought thus, his mind rested for a moment upon Walter Dixon, and he could not but ask himself, "Will that man yet escape? and what will be his fate?"

Even while he was thus thinking, his page, little Ball-o'-fire, ran into the room, with his dark eyes blazing.

"Where have you been, boy?" asked his master; "it is late, and I have needed you."

"I have been watching a hawk hovering over a dovecot," replied the boy.

"You think more than you say, boy," replied his master, catching a look of deeper meaning in his face; "speak out—I command you!"

"Well, then," answered the page, "I have been watching Walter Dixon prying about, and asking questions at all the cottages near the gate. If he comes for good, he must be good indeed, for he rises betimes to do it."

Till that moment, it had never struck Henry Masterton, how keen would be the disappointment of the bad man of whom he had been thinking, on discovering that the estates which he had aimed at so long, so perseveringly, and so daringly, were offered to another. But now that it did strike him, he felt instantly convinced that Walter Dixon would not tamely stand and see them in the power of any one to refuse or accept. What means he might take, it was impossible to tell; but that the means he did take would be bold, villanous, and remorseless, none that knew the man could doubt. Henry had already seen blood spilt by his hand, and his suspicions of the motive which led him to spill that blood were too strong not to point his fears towards a similar attempt against Lord Langleigh. He had seen, too, exposed openly by himself, the artful and insidious manner in which he had pursued his plan from step to step, and still, when baffled in one attempt of knavery, had betaken himself to some scheme still blacker than the former. He could not yet know, however, Henry thought, the offer that had been made to Lord Langleigh, and therefore, whatever were his motives for being in the neighbourhood of St. Maur so early, they could hardly originate in such a source. The active suspicions of little Ball-o'-fire, however, he did not choose to check, and therefore, before he left him, he bade him with a smile, "keep a good watch upon the enemy."

"I will, I will!" replied the boy, and Henry Masterton felt more confidence in his energetic intelligence, than he would have done in twenty sentries at the park gates.

It is well nigh impossible to describe the passing of happy days. Life is always like a stream, whatever character it may assume. Grief murmurs, anger roars, impatience frets; but happiness, like a calm river, flows on in quiet sunlight, without an eddy or a fall to mark the rushing on of time towards eternity. Henry and Emily met in happiness, and for more than one hour they were left to enjoy that happiness alone.

Lord Langleigh and Lady Margaret joined them at the morning meal, and that, too, passed in pleasant ease. There was much to be told, and much to be spoken of; and Emily's father then informed them, that he had that morning dispatched a packet to London, to reject the restoration of his estates, while offered as a boon by the Council of State. He had still, however, he said, claimed them as a right, and so had left the question for future years.

Little passed besides, that is not already recorded in these pages, except the history which Lord Langleigh gave of his life, which he did while, at his own proposal, they walked forth into the grounds around the house. The mid-day sun had gained a greater warmth than it had possessed on the day

before, the cold wind was lulled to sleep, and the hoar frost, which in the morning had whitened all the grass, was now melting into diamonds round the green blades whereon it hung. Lord Langleigh rendered the tale as short as possible, and here perhaps it is abridged still more.

"To you, Henry," he said, "my story is to be told; for Emily already knows it, and I think you yourself have heard as far as my escape from prison. How that escape was contrived, matters not; I trust in God that the bolts of the Tower of London may never be drawn upon you. In my case, they were opened by a friend—poor Swainson, the captain of the guard—the very night previous to the morning appointed for my execution. I confess that the whole business took me by surprise, and it seemed as if I woke from a dream, when I found myself in a boat putting off from Sheerness for a Dutch brig that lay out a little distance from the land. How much more surprised was I to find, that the whole had been contrived for some weeks, and that that angelic being whose portrait you saw in my library, had died under the united exertions she made to procure my pardon, and to ensure my escape if that pardon was refused. She had been the main mover of all. She had hired the vessel to carry me away. She had bribed more than one of the meaner agents, and she had sold jewels and plate, and everything she could collect, to give us at least a competence on a foreign shore. Her last act was to vest the whole money she had collected in diamonds; but she lived not to see the success of her plans. She died even before she could communicate them to me; and it was a former protégé of my own, and one who had been her chief instrument, that after embarking with me at Sheerness, put a small purse into my hands, containing the value of thirty thousand pounds in precious stones.

"The anchor was weighed the moment I was on board, and, going below, I found that the only passenger besides myself and the person who conducted me thither, was a young English lad of the name of Ireton, who would fain see foreign lands. He was a keen, enthusiastic boy, full of strange notions and Utopian schemes of perfect republics, and things that the world can never see.

"At length, after beating about during the whole morning, I went to bed, for I was weary and exhausted; and how long I slept I do not know, but I woke to find all in confusion and dismay. I will not try to tell the horrors of a shipwreck; the ship had struck—all was darkness and tempest around us—the rain was pouring in torrents—the waves were dashing over us every moment, and the wind was roaring as if with demon pleasure at our distressed state. The ship had heeled-to, till her yards dipped in the water, and the deck was half covered. The

Dutchmen were resolved to be drowned quietly, and my poor deliverer, Captain Swainson, just as I was coming upon deck, jumped overboard, though hurt by the fall of the mast, and tried to swim for some lights we saw upon the shore at the distance of perhaps a mile. He reached the land, I find, but died from his bruises on the beach. Ireton was bit with the same madness, and though he could not swim a stroke, would have plunged over too; but I prevented him, and tied him to a spar, while he did the same good office for myself. I could swim well, and am not wont to lose my coolness, especially in cold water; the pilot's office, therefore, fell to me, and holding tight by the poor boy, who, to do him justice, was as firm as a rock, I steered for the land. We were disappointed, however, in our first efforts, for right before us lay a reef over which the surf was beating furiously. Had we attempted that, death would have been our certain portion, and it required all my strength and skill to keep us clear. Nevertheless, buoyed up by the spars to which we were tied, keeping a good heart, and using no efforts but those that might guide but not exhaust us, we got along the shore to a small calm bay, under some high rocks, on the coast of Kent. I had nothing with me but my small purse of jewels, and a little horn bottle of strong waters that served us in good stead, for we were dying of cold.

"When day broke, however, we found that we had partly swam and had partly been drifted near three miles from the ship, which now lay a complete wreck upon the sands. Day, however, was a more pleasing sight to Ireton than it was to me, for he had lived long in Kent, and had an aunt dwelling within a few miles of the spot where we then stood. He knew or guessed my situation, however, and in return for my having saved his life, he plighted his existence upon the security of mine. At his aunt's I lay secreted for ten days, till all pursuit was over, and the government were convinced that I had perished. As a vessel could not there be procured, I at length bade adieu to my kind hostess and her nephew, to whom I promised an account of my future fate; and then walking across the country in the disguise of a pedlar, presented myself at the gate of my good cousins, Lady Margaret and Sir Thomas Langleigh. They were then in the height of prosperity, and even of court favour; but when once I had made my way to speech of them, which was not easy, they received me with open arms, and provided for my farther escape. I thought, at that time, of claiming my dear Emily from your father, Henry, as soon as I should be established in France; but I was dissuaded by my cousin Margaret, who pointed out to me, that, in the rambling and uncertain life I might probably lead, she could not be so well provided for as under the care of the Lord Masterton."

"In truth, my good cousin," said Lady Margaret, "I had one motive which I did not tell you—I feared that you might take to your bosom another wife, in which case our poor Emily might have suffered some hardships."

"You did me wrong," replied Lord Langleigh; "but, however, I thought your judgment best, and the more so when I reflected that my noble friend had promised to unite her to his eldest son. My own feelings bade me reclaim her, but the better considerations of my child's future fate and happiness made me decide upon leaving her in hands that I knew would do her justice. The desire of having her with me was the only inducement I could have had to suffer my escape from my doom to transpire; and when that was removed by my determination to leave her behind, I farther resolved to confine my secret to the bosoms with which it already rested. I proposed, indeed, Henry, to entrust it also to your father, and I made two attempts to see him, with the purpose of so doing; but the austerity of his retirement, and the somewhat proud reserve in which he lived, frustrated my endeavours to communicate with him personally, and I dared not trust the whole details of my secret in writing. Even to Lady Margaret I wrote under my assumed name, and lucky it proved that I did so, for more than one of my letters miscarried. Thus passed the years: Lord Masterton guarded and protected my Emily, and Lady Margaret watched over her continually, while, on a foreign shore, I dropped the name which had been branded with the charge of treason, and assuming that of the property I bought, passed my time as best I might. To one person more I was obliged to disclose my secret—the Cardinal de Richelieu, whose eyes fell upon me with keen suspicion the moment I entered France; but I told him my whole tale, and produced proofs that he could not doubt. Once satisfied, he was kind and liberal, gave me by letters patent a title to the name I had assumed, and opened the way for me in the French army. I will not fight all my battles over again; suffice it that I did as well as the rest, and rose to the rank I now bear. Every day, however,—though I continually longed to see my child,—I was more and more convinced that the advice of Lady Margaret was wise; and though I twice ventured over to England and contrived to get a sight of my Emily in her early youth, I refrained, though with pain, from claiming her. I had one consolation, however, in my solitude. My excellent cousin here, Lady Margaret, when all the effects of the Lord Langleigh were sold off as the property of a traitor, bought that picture which you saw in my library, and afterwards sent it to me, to whom it was most valuable. With it before my eyes, how often have I fancied that I could hold communion with the dead! But to

leave that subject; my last visit to England was when I accompanied Sir Andrew Fleming, and on that occasion, as I remained there some months, I had nearly fallen into the hands of the Parliamentarians more than once.

"I should have cared little about it, on my own account, if such an event had taken place, but, beyond doubt, it would have cost poor Fleming his life. The greatest cause of uneasiness which I met with was the conduct of your brother. Sir Andrew Fleming hovered round his bad wife with a strange mixture of jealousy, and hatred, and love; and even to catch a casual sight of her as she passed, was excitement enough almost to drive him out of his senses for the day. When your regiment of cavalry was quartered at Penford-bourne, we drew nearer, but some one conveyed a letter to Sir Andrew Fleming, which told him tales that I shall not repeat."

Lord Langleigh glanced his eye towards Emily, to intimate that her presence did not permit his noticing more fully the contents of the letter, and then proceeded:—"The result was a meeting between Sir Andrew Fleming and your brother, which was interrupted by your arrival with some horsemen. Your brother behaved gallantly, and as he and Sir Andrew were nearly equal in the use of their weapon, how the affair would have terminated had you not come up, Heaven only knows. Sir Andrew was severely wounded, as well as your brother, and he quitted England soon after. I was uneasy and unhappy concerning the fate of my dear Emily, and I wandered for some time in the neighbourhood of Masterton House. But at length I found that your brother had returned, that he was living a regular and apparently happy life in his own family, and I began to believe that he had been calumniated. However, I wrote to Lady Margaret, bidding her watch carefully over my Emily, and, if she found that the marriage proposed was likely to be unhappy, in my name to oppose it, and reveal all to Lord Masterton. But the civil war had deranged all communications, and my letter never reached its destination. Lady Margaret, on her part, wrote twice to me from Masterton House, telling me that she saw clearly the proposed marriage would render all engaged in it miserable, and beseeching me to authorize her to put a stop to it. But I was still absent from Paris, and I received at once on my return to my own dwelling those two epistles, and a third, which gave me the intelligence that my child was safe in France, after the many dangers and horrors she had gone through. All that has happened since you already know; and—I have only farther to show you my greenhouse, in which I have contrived to baffle winter and all his frosts, and keep sweet flowers while the snow is on the ground."

Henry smiled at the sudden transition, and was going to ask

some farther questions, when a little girl came running along one of the walks, and, approaching Lord Langleigh with a familiarity that showed the known urbanity of his nature, told him that her mother was very ill that morning, and that the kind good gentleman said she had better send for Monsieur immediately.

"What kind good gentleman do you mean, little Adele?" replied Lord Langleigh, patting her white, curly head.

"Oh, a good gentleman who has been two or three times in the cottage to-day, and was asking both my father and mother a great many questions," answered the child.

"My poor gardener's wife is dying, I am afraid," said Lord Langleigh, in English. "You, Henry, continue your walk with Emily and Lady Margaret, and I will rejoin you in a moment: I am both master and physician here, so I must needs go and see my patient."

"A letter, sir," said one of the servants, coming up suddenly from the house: "old André du Chesne, from the hamlet, brought it, saying that it was to be delivered immediately."

Lord Langleigh turned the letter to break the seal, bidding the child go home and tell her mother he would be at their cottage immediately; but before the wax had given way under his hand he asked the attendant, "Is the old man waiting for an answer?"

"No, sir; he merely left the letter and went away," replied the other.

"Then put it on the table in my library," he said, giving it to the man; "I will come back and read it directly. It is odd enough," he continued, speaking to Lord Masterton in English. "That letter is addressed to me as Lord Langleigh: but humanity must not give way to curiosity; so I will go to this poor woman, and on my return we will see who has so soon found out what has lately taken place."

Thus saying, he turned and left them, and Henry walked on beside Emily. Scarcely had Lord Masterton taken ten steps, however, when a sort of misgiving came over the young cavalier's heart. He could not well tell why he feared, or what it was he apprehended. It was more an impression that there was some danger near, than any clear conviction of the probability of any real peril; one of those vague, undefined feelings of approaching evil that every one has experienced more or less in his passage through life, which are forgotten when they pass over unfulfilled by any after event, but which are treasured up carefully by superstition whenever they are casually dignified by succeeding circumstances. There was something, he could not help thinking, strange about the letter addressed to Lord Langleigh, when the existence of such a person had only been known to three people for a space of eighteen years before. He remembered

also what little Ball-o'-fire had told him in the morning: and, though he could not believe that Walter Dixon could yet have received intelligence of the failure of his schemes, he blamed himself for not having communicated to Lord Langleigh the suspicion he entertained.

Such were the thoughts and feelings that crossed his mind soon after Lord Langleigh had left them; and on looking round, he perceived that some grooms were near at the moment leading their horses from the water towards the house, which was not far distant, so that Emily and Lady Margaret were in safety. Henry determined, therefore, to follow Lord Langleigh even at the risk of incurring a charge of idle apprehension.

"There is something which I forgot to say to your father, beloved," he said, turning to Emily, somewhat abruptly; "and as I ought to have told him before, my Emily will forgive my leaving her. Go on to the house, dear girl, and I will be back with you in an instant."

Emily looked surprised; but Lady Margaret, who had remarked more keenly the changes of Lord Masterton's countenance, saw that something was wrong, and, without question, at once replied that they would wait him in the library.

Henry instantly hurried after Lord Langleigh, but the other walked fast, and was a good way through the wood before the young cavalier even came in sight of him. He did so, however, at the turn of a long alley, which led direct to the little cottage of the gardener. The alley itself was clear and open, and the trees on each side were not very thick, but there was a good deal of low cut beech about, on which, though the season was winter, the brown leaves still hung as thick as the green ones in summer.

About half way down the walk, that is to say, at the distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, was to be seen the figure of Lord Langleigh alone, for the little girl had run on before him to the cottage; and Henry Masterton took two or three steps onward before he perceived that there was any other person near. Whether it was some sound called his attention, or mere accident directed his eyes that way, he knew not, but his glance, a moment after he had entered that avenue, turned towards the trees at the left hand side, where the brushwood was thickest; and there, about half way again between him and Lord Langleigh, he beheld the figures of two men advanced a little beyond the copse, but not beyond the tall trees that bordered the walk. One stood a step behind the other, while the first, leaning against one of the larger beech trees, seemed taking a cool and deliberate aim with a steel cross-bow, which he held in his hand, at the figure of the nobleman, whose back was turned towards him.

The agony of the young cavalier at that moment is hardly to be described. He was too far off to render the least assistance;

and as the wind set towards him, the very sound of his voice might not reach the ears of the assassins in time to stay them. He paused not to think, however, but springing like lightning, he shouted Lord Langleigh's name with his whole power.

The sound just reached them and made the murderers start. "Fool! fool!" cried the man behind, "fire, at all events; we shall be over the wall before he can reach us;" and seizing the cross-bow from the hands of the other, he raised it to his own shoulder. But at that moment, there was a rustle in the opposite wood like a deer starting through a brake; and in an instant afterwards, with one bound, little Ball-o'-fire cleared the bushes and the alley, and sprang at the throat of him with the cross-bow like a famished wolf. Henry saw the boy grasp his collar with one hand and raise the other high; and the next moment they both went down and rolled on the ground together.

The noise and the shouting had caused Lord Langleigh himself to turn; and Henry was by this time within twenty yards of the spot. One of the assassins was still rolling with the boy on the earth, and the other, seeing himself detected, sprang away through the copse wood. Henry followed like lightning, and a few hundred yards brought them both to the park wall. A ladder was placed against it, and the fugitive had nearly reached the top, when Lord Masterton with a great exertion sprang up, caught him by the arm, and hurled him down backward to the ground. Henry drew his sword, and setting his foot upon his breast, gazed upon his face, from which a mask that had before covered it had been dashed in his fall; but the countenance, though not exactly that of a stranger, was not familiar to him.

"Who are you?" cried Henry. "Villain, who are you?" but the man replied nothing, and struggled to rise, so that a more deadly contest might have taken place between them, had not the sound of voices coming through the wood in search of them, shown the assassin that the struggle could not be long.

"I will yield, I will yield," he cried at length; "do your best to get me a pardon, and I will tell all."

As he spoke, the figure of the little page appeared through the trees, followed by Lord Langleigh and the gardener. The boy was absolutely drenched and dripping with blood; but the lightness of his movements showed that it was none of his own. With this assistance the prisoner was immediately disarmed and bound, to which he offered no resistance, only repeating from time to time: "Do your best to get me a pardon, and I will tell all."

"Nobody wants you to tell anything," cried the boy; "we know it all already. But here is a ladder, there must be some one outside;" and springing up, he was at the top of the wall in a moment. In the high road, which, we have seen, flanked

one side of the park, were standing three horses, two of which were held by a man, who was mounted on the third. From time to time he cast his eye towards the part of the wall over which his companions had prepared their escape. The moment he saw the face of little Ball-o'-fire, however,—which was in sooth frightful enough to behold—he set spurs to his beast, and, still holding the other two, galloped off towards Paris at full speed.

“Fly, fly to the house!” cried the page; “send out horses after him, and we shall have them all.”

“You will not catch him,” murmured the man they had taken, “and if you did, what good would it do you, any more than keeping me? The man that set us on lies dead in the walk, if that young tiger’s steel went as deep as it seemed to me to do.”

“That did it! that did it!” replied the boy; “it went into his heart, ay, and through it—I have paid him the blow he struck me—and he will never strike another.”

“Then was it Walter Dixon himself?” said Lord Masterton; “and you have slain him outright, boy?”

“It is certainly the man who proved himself in England so inveterate an enemy of my poor friend Fleming,” replied Lord Langleigh, “and he is as dead as the parting of body and soul can make him. But what could be his design in endeavouring to shoot me with a cross-bow, as your boy tells me he attempted, I am yet to learn. I never gave the scoundrel any offence but in being the friend of Sir Andrew Fleming.”

“Do your best to get my pardon, and I will tell you all about it,” murmured the prisoner.

“I will make no conditions, sir,” answered Lord Langleigh; “speak, and if it appears you are less guilty than you seem, you may escape; but that is your only chance.”

“Well, then,” said the other, “I may as well tell all I know. Yon General Walter Dixon heard last night, as he told me this morning, and that by a certain hand, that the Parliament or the Council, I do not well know which, had given his estates to this Lord Langleigh, and he offered me and another English cavalier I wont name, forty louis each, if we would join him in a little bit of sharp work here, which, as he said, was no every-day matter certainly, but would be over in five minutes. Well, what would you have us do? Here we are in Paris, starving—three days out of four not a morsel of meat enters our mouths, and the fourth day’s meal we get on charity. Driven out of our native country by the cuckoldy Roundheads, without a sixpence in the world——”

But Henry Masterton cut short the exculpation, or rather the excuses which the ruffian was making, for carrying perhaps to

a more dreadful extent in France, the same crimes with which he had probably been conversant in England.

"Let us hear this man's tale, my lord, another time," he said; "I have seen this goodly gentleman before, engaged in a little affair not very dissimilar to that in which we have now caught him. He is an unhappy wretch, I believe, and as I know his connexion with Walter Dixon, I can well conceive that he has been a tool in the hands of that artful fiend. He has told all that he knows, as far as it immediately concerns us, already; and I can tell you a great deal more myself. Indeed it was for that purpose I left Lady Margaret and Emily somewhat abruptly, and I fear they may be alarmed by this time at our absence."

Lord Langleigh at once acceded to Henry's wish to return; and, pinioned strongly, the prisoner was brought after them by the gardener. The whole of the young cavalier's knowledge of Walter Dixon was told as they proceeded towards the house; and the causes which led him to fear some attempt upon the life of Lord Langleigh, as soon as the other became aware that his schemes were baffled, were easily explained.

"Ending as it has done," said Lord Langleigh, with a smile, "I am not sorry, my dear boy, that you did not tell me your apprehensions till they were justified by the event; for I own I should have been fool enough to have laughed at them, and perhaps might have lost my life for my pains. There lies the carrion of that base villain; and, on my faith, I must think of some reward for this bold boy, who has played his part better than many a man would have done it."

"I would have done better still," replied the boy, "and stabbed him before the string was drawn, if I had not run to call my lord, as soon as I saw them creeping through the bushes; but before I could reach him, I caught a sight of his cloak coming down the alley, and ran on to be there in time."

Henry Masterton paused a moment, to gaze upon the contorted form of Walter Dixon, as it lay upon the path, with the cross-bow and bullet fallen at a little distance, and the whole frosty ground round about deluged with blood. The hands were still clenched and the arms extended, as when the boy had freed himself from their convulsive grasp, and the features, though calmed by the all-quieting hand of death, still bore evident traces of the fierce and deadly passions which had been the habitual tenants of his bosom.

"So, this is the end of all thy villanies and all thy boasted cunning!" said the young cavalier, as he gazed upon him. "To die by the hand of a boy, in the last despairing effort of thy wickedness!"

But little more was discovered of the transactions of that day. It appeared that Walter Dixon had been more than once at the cottage of the gardener during the morning; and after having informed himself of all the general habits of Lord Langleigh, had sent the child down to desire his presence, without the knowledge of the woman herself, who was, in fact, much better than she had been the day before. On farther questioning their prisoner, it was discovered that the name of the man who had borne the news of Lord Langleigh's restoration to his estates had been mentioned by Dixon, and that it was Manuel; and on consequent inquiry in Paris, such was found to be the appellation of a well-known Jewish agent, who had left the French capital suddenly the morning after the death of Walter Dixon became public news. It may be mentioned here also, that the same Manuel became bankrupt in London within one month afterwards, and, by the infamous knavery of his dealings, brought ruin and desolation to the hearths of many a happy and an honest family. Two other persons also, it was discovered, had quitted Paris about the same time, after having plundered the lodgings which Dixon had occupied of every portable article of value that they contained. The one was his servant Stillingham; the other, it is supposed, was Wighton, as those two worthies became notorious swindlers in London; and about a year and a half after, graced the gallows at Tyburn, for robbing and maltreating the secretary of General Harrison.

As to Master Daintree, the companion of Walter Dixon, who had been taken by Henry Masterton, a degree of mystery attaches to his fate, which I am not adequate to solve. He was confined in a chamber of Lord Langleigh's house, that was deemed secure, but the next morning it was discovered that, without the slightest appearance of effort or violence in any part of the doors or windows, he had made his escape. Little Ball-o'-fire was the last person seen near those apartments, and he was afterwards heard to say that it would have been a pity if the fellow had been hanged, for that, though he had at last consorted with a Roundhead, for the sake of a few broad pieces, he was a true Cavalier at heart. This caused some suspicion amongst the servants, but as neither Lord Langleigh nor Lord Masterton seemed to entertain any, the matter dropped and was forgotten.

I have now very nearly arrived at the end of my story without being aware of it; and, in truth, I do not very well know what more is to be told. My lord, who is now sitting in his easy chair on the opposite side of the fire, forbids my saying anything of his campaign upon the Rhine, and the countess begs me, in pity to all parties, not to give an account of the wedding which took place about three months after the events

I have lately been describing. Upon these subjects, therefore, I must not employ my pen; and it is scarcely necessary to tell any of my countrymen that the estates both of Lord Langleigh and Lord Masterton were left unappropriated by the Parliamentary commissioners, till the restoration of King Charles the Second gave them back to their right owners. It is now nearly five-and-twenty years since that restoration took place, and almost ten since the good Lord Langleigh went to join in heaven a wife he had never ceased to love on earth. His cousin Lady Margaret died some years before; and having said thus much, I believe I have mentioned all the persons connected with this history, except him whom we have distinguished by the name of little Ball-o'-fire; but, as his after-fate is treated of in another book, it is not for me to speak of it here. However, if any person whatsoever, moved by laudable curiosity, should desire farther explanations or information regarding any person or circumstance hereinbefore mentioned, they have only to apply to me, John Woolsanger, M.A., at the rectory of Masterton parish, not far from Newton Bushel, in Devonshire, when I will satisfy them to their heart's content, all the documents, papers, procès verbaux, notes, memorandums, and letters, having been entrusted for that purpose to my charge, by my good and excellent lord and patron, Henry Lord Masterton, of Masterton House, and, since the Restoration, Earl of Kinlivingstone, in Ireland.

THE END.

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